ADVENT TO WHIT SUNDAY

Cornelius W. J. Wilson.
August 1926

VILLAGE PREACHING
FOR A YEAR.

John J. Major
Belvoir Hall
Ballymacarrett
Belfast

1891

John J. Major

VILLAGE PREACHING

FOR A YEAR.

FIRST SERIES.

BY THE REV.

S. Baring-Gould, M.A.,

Author of "The Village Pulpit" for a Year, "Village Preaching for Saints' Days," "Preacher's Pocket," "Sermons to Children," and "Village Preaching for a Year, second series."

VOL. I.

ADVENT TO WHIT-SUNDAY.

Fifth Edition.

London:

W. SKEFFINGTON AND SON, 163, PICCADILLY.

1883.

DEDICATED

WITH LOVE AND VENERATION TO

THE REV. JOHN SHARP, M.A.,

VICAR OF HORBURY.

CONTENTS.

Advent Sunday 9

Second Sunday in Advent 19

Third Sunday in Advent 29

Fourth Sunday in Advent 39

Christmas Day 48

Sunday after Christmas 57

New Year's Eve 66

Circumcision. (New Year's Day.) 75

The Epiphany 85

First Sunday after the Epiphany 95

Second Sunday after the Epiphany 105

Third Sunday after the Epiphany 115

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany 125

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany 136

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany 146

Septuagesima Sunday 157

Sexagesima Sunday 168

Quinquagesima Sunday 178
Ash Wednesday 189
First Sunday in Lent 198
Second Sunday in Lent 209
Third Sunday in Lent 219
Fourth Sunday in Lent 229
Fifth Sunday in Lent 238
Palm Sunday 249
Maundy Thursday 260
Good Friday 270
Easter Day 279
First Sunday after Easter 289
Second Sunday after Easter 300
Third Sunday after Easter 310
Fourth Sunday after Easter 319
Fifth Sunday after Easter 329
Ascension Day 341
Sunday after Ascension Day 350
Whitsunday 361

SERMON I.

MORAL COWARDICE.

(1st Sunday in Advent.)

Psalm lxxviii., 9.

"Like as the children of Ephraim, who being harnessed and carrying bows, turned themselves back in the day of battle."

I do not know what the circumstances were to which the psalmist alludes, further than that in a certain battle, against whom we are not told, the tribe of Ephraim, fully armed with shield and bow, for protection and for attack, instead of fighting with the courage which soldiers ought to exhibit, turned their backs and ran away.

The circumstances are nowhere else more fully detailed. If the event happened before the days of Solomon, then very probably the writers of the narrative of the march of the Israelites through the wilderness, and of their entry into

the Promised Land, omitted this disgraceful incident, so as not to hurt the feelings of the children of Ephraim in after times, so as not to keep open the sore, but to let byegones be byegones.

Ephraim possessed a most admirable portion of Palestine, the centre of the country where Samaria afterwards was. It had mountains, with streams of running water, and broad plains covered with rich vegetation. The children of Ephraim and the sons of Judah never agreed very cordially after they were settled in the Promised Land. The Ephraimites were continually making jealous complaints at some enterprise undertaken, or advantage gained, in which they thought their interests were not concerned, or out of which they did not recover a chief share of the spoil.

The unsettled state of the country in general, and of the interior of Ephraim in particular, and the never ceasing peril from the incursions of foreigners, prevented the power of the tribe from manifesting itself in a more formidable manner than by murmurs, during the time of the Judges and the first stage of the monarchy.

But the reign of Solomon, splendid in appear-

ance, was most irksome to the people, who were hard pressed with taxes to support his magnificence. The oppression exercised by Solomon developed both the circumstances of revolt, and the leader who was to turn them to account. Solomon saw through the crisis; he saw that Jeroboam was the active spirit about whom the discontented would rally, and he sought to kill him. Jeroboam fled to Egypt, and remained there till the death of Solomon. (1 Kings xi., 40—43.) The insane folly of Rehoboam brought the mischief to a head, and rent the holy people into two kingdoms, that of Judah and that of Israel.

The seventy-eighth psalm is by Asaph, the chief singer to David, but it was almost certainly written by him after the quarrel with Ephraim had broken out, and the separation was effected. For otherwise he would never have thrown out the taunt of the cowardice of Ephraim in the day of battle running away full armed, nor verses 67, 68. "He—that is God—refused the taber-"nacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of "Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the "Mount Zion which He loved." Such words would never have been sung in the temple whilst

the discontent was simmering, lest it should exasperate the children of Ephraim when they came up to Jerusalem to worship.

When Ephraim had separated from Judah, then the old story of the cowardice of Ephraim in the day of battle was raked up.

When did it happen? That we cannot tell. Was it when the Israelites were invading the Promised Land, and Ephraim having got his own share did not care to fight the battles of the other tribes? We cannot say, nor does it matter. All we know, and all it behoves us to know, is that Ephraim behaved disgracefully in a certain battle.

Asaph the psalmist warns the faithful of the kingdom of Judah not to forget God's great works, nor His commandments, nor to set their hopes elsewhere than in Him, nor to be stubborn and rebellious, with no stedfastness,—"like the "children of Ephraim who, being harnessed, "and carrying bows, turned themselves back in "the day of battle."

We have been harnessed for battle, and sent forth to fight, and it is quite possible that some of us may be like those children of Ephraim, and turn back in the day of battle. When we

were baptized, we were enrolled in the army of our great Captain and King, Jesus Christ As the priest signs the Cross on the head of the child whom he holds at the font, and has admitted into the ranks of the great army, he says, "We receive this child into the congregation of "Christ's Church, and do sign him with the sign "of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall "not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ "crucified, and manfully to fight under his ban-"ner against sin, the world, and the devil, and "continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant "unto his life's end."

In baptism the child is enrolled; he takes on him vows of allegiance to his King, and of obedience to his great Captain. He promises to fight manfully as a good soldier of Jesus against the sinful lusts of the flesh, against the spirit of this world at enmity with God and His Church, and against the Devil, the instigator of spiritual pride and rebellion.

Now observe these Ephraimites. They forgot the wonderful works that God had wrought, they had lost their faith.

They forgot the commandments he had set them; they gave up their obedience.

They set not their hope aright; that is, in God, but rested their hopes on something else, their fertile land, the protection of their rocks and mountains. They were stubborn; following their own wills, instead of bowing their necks to the will of God. They were rebellious; not obeying the God they had promised to accept as their leader;—and the result was, that though harnessed, and carrying bows, when called forth to fight the enemies of their God and nation, instead of striking a blow, "they turned them-"selves back in the day of battle."

The case was not only one of cowardice, it was also one of high treason.

We may be guilty of the same cowardice and high treason, as the children of Ephraim, if we forget the commandments of God, and His wonderful works, and set not our hope aright, are stubborn, rebellious, and unsteadfast. These are the conditions of mind and soul in which we are liable to fall into treason and acts of moral cowardice.

The commandments of God must never be forgotten; they were cut with the finger of God on stone, to show that their obligation was paramount. Let our religious life be based on *feel-*

ing, in place of *obedience*, let us dissociate in idea faith and duty, and we run a great chance of turning back in the day of battle, and abandoning that ground which we had been set to maintain.

Or again, let us forget God our Saviour, and the wonderful works he has wrought; let God be out of our minds, out of our calculations for every day, and we shall be sure, the moment the battle begins, to turn back.

Or let us set our hope wrong, in something transitory, earthly; let the cares and speculations of this life fill our horizon, and be the sole points to which our hopes tend; and when temptation and trial arise, we shall turn back.

Or let us be stubborn, bent on following our own will, regardless of the will of God, have our own ends, instead of looking to carry out the glory of God, and we shall infallibly turn back in the day of battle. So, again, if we are rebellious, if we will not act under the leaders God has appointed over us, if we will not obey those laws which He has given through His Church for the governance of His army, but set up our own theories, guesses, fancies in their room; when the time of conflict comes, very probably we shall

be found though harnessed and carrying bows, yet turners back in the day of battle.

And, what is it, to turn back in the day of battle? It is not to fight when God has bid us fight. We have promised most solemnly when enrolled in His army, to renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.

If, when the Devil assaults us with thoughts of spiritual pride, we yield, and make no resistance; If, when the world allures us from the service of God, to a life of careless indifference and pleasure seeking, we give way; If, when the flesh prompts to yield to passion, we make no struggle to conquer its sinful lusts;—Then, being harnessed with divine grace, given to us at our Baptism, and furnished with the bow of prayer, we are turning back in the day of battle.

Moral courage is a difficult thing to acquire, it is so much easier always to give way. When laughed at for going to Church, for saying your private prayers, it is so easy to give way. Yet how noble it is to resist! Some years ago, at a large public school in the south of England, the boys in their dormitories tumbled into bed at night without saying their prayers. New boys

coming to school were speedily laughed out of their piety, if they bent the knee by the bedside before retiring to rest. At last there came a new boy, very young, carefully brought up. The first night he arrived, he knelt down as he had at home, he was greeted with laughter and groans of mockery, but he never moved till he had finished his usual prayers. Next night it was the same. In vain did the big boys try to make him give up. The little fellow was like a rock, harnessed with the armour of God, he bent his bow, and his prayer like an arrow pierced the clouds. Now there were, in the same dormitory, other boys who, at home, had always said their prayers, but who, shrinking from ridicule, had given up the practice in school. Seeing the courage of the little fellow, they plucked up spirit also, and began to kneel down to say their prayers also. The practice spread, was recognised, and the masters hearing of it interfered, and thenceforth silence for ten minutes after entering their dormitories was enforced on the boys, and all knelt to their prayers. The custom has ever since prevailed. A few years ago, that boy, grown to a middle aged man, died. Brave soldier, who turned not back in the day of battle!

"He that shall confess me before men," said our Lord, "Him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven."

Who would not win such a glorious confession! Harnessed and carrying his bow, let him stand fast in the day of battle.

"Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His Eternal Son.

"Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in His mighty power;
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

"Stand then in His great might
With all His strength endued,
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God.

"From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle, and fight, and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well fought day.

"That having all things done,
And all your conflicts past,
Ye may obtain, through Christ alone
A crown of joy at last."

SERMON II.

MEETING OUR SINS AGAIN.

(2ND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.)

---

2 SAM. I. 9.

"Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is whole in me."

IF you will look at the margins of your Bible, you will find that there is considerable uncertainty as to the manner in which this verse is to be translated.

Saul had gone out with an army to fight the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, but the battle went against him and he was wounded. According to the account given by an Amalekite to David afterwards, the Israelites were flying, and Saul, unable to get any further, on account of his weariness and wound, leaned on his spear. The chariots and horsemen of the Philistines were drawing on, then the young Amalekite came

near, and Saul called to him, and said, "Stand, "I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish "is come upon me." In the margins of your Bibles, you will see instead of "anguish," the words, "my coat of mail," or "my embroidered "coat hindereth me."

The meaning of the passage is somewhat obscure, and "anguish" is a conjectural rendering, to give it sense. But a more exact translation would probably be, "Stand, I pray thee, upon "me, and slay me: for the coloured (or embroid-"ered) garment troubleth me, and my life is "whole in me." I have no doubt that Saul meant that he was unable to fly, either because his coat of mail was too heavy, or because his flowing royal embroidered garment incommoded him. But there is a very curious interpretation of this passage given by an ancient writer, which I wish to bring before you, though I believe it is a fanciful explanation, and not the real one He says that the word signifying "embroidered gar-"ment," is one which has, in Holy Scripture, special reference to priestly apparel. Then he bids us remember how that Saul had committed an atrocious crime: he had put to death in cold blood eighty-five of the priests of the Lord at Nob. That

crime was the turning point of Saul's fortunes; from that moment, disaster, humiliation, and ruin, came upon him. It was a sad ending for one whose rise had been so full of promise. And now on Mount Gilboa, leaning on his spear, weary, and sick at heart, his son Jonathan slain, his people killed or flying, his country overrun by the Philistines, he bleeds from his wounds and wishes for death; and, says this ancient commentator,* then there rises up before his eye to haunt him, the bloody embroidered vesture of the priests of Nob. Now, when brought to the lowest pitch of misery, when life is ebbing away, and hope is all gone, the great crime of his life stands before him, in all its ghastly wickedness, and in his despair he cries to the passing Amalekite, "Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: "for the priestly vesture of those I massacred, "dripping with their blood, floats before my "eyes, and distresseth me, and my life is whole "in me."

I do not at all assert that this is the right interpretation of the passage, it is far too fanciful to be likely to be so; but it is a very striking one, and it does bring forward a truth, and

* Abullensis, *i. e.*, Alfonso Tostate, B. of Avila, b. 1412, d. 1452.

direct our attention to what no doubt did pass in the mind of Saul at that moment. Whether the text means what the commentator says, or not, we may be tolerably sure that Saul's thoughts were on that fatal mistake, that sacrilegious crime.

As he stood leaning sadly on his spear without a hope in this world, surely his mind reverted to the past, and reviewed his conduct. He saw what grievous errors he had committed, what crimes he had been guilty of, and how that errors and crimes had united to work his ruin. Why had he quarreled with David? Out of jealousy, because the young man was a better warrior than himself, and also because he had heard a rumour that Samuel had anointed him as his successor, in the room of Jonathan.

He saw how he had estranged David from him, and driven him away. Now, in the hour of need, David's strong arm, and band of sturdy followers, would have turned the tide of battle. By his folly in resisting God's decree, and fighting against what had been ordained, he had brought himself to ruin. The battle of Gilboa would never have been lost, had he not made David an outcast.

He saw too how fatal to his fortunes was that day when, in his bitter anger against the unoffending David, he had slain the priests of Nob for giving shelter and food to David when flying from him. Saul had ordered his own servants to fall on the priests and murder them, but they had refused to lay their hands on God's consecrated servants. This ought to have been a warning to Saul. But he was so blinded by his fury, that he would take no warning, and he sent Doeg the Edomite in amongst the priests sword in hand, and the savage idolater had killed eighty-five priests.

Then God had withdrawn his protection from Saul, and had given him up to ruin. Feeling himself deserted, he had turned to consult witches as to the future, and the witch of Endor has summoned up the ghost of Samuel, who had foretold to him his defeat and death. "I am "sore distressed," had been the plaintive wail of the dejected king, "for the Philistines make war "against me, and God is departed from me, and "answereth me no more, neither by prophets, "nor by dreams."

Observe also on whom the dying eyes of Saul rest. On an Amalekite. As the young man was

passing by, Saul called to him, and said, "Who art thou?" And the young man answered him, "I am an Amalekite." These were the last words that sounded in Saul's ears.

What a striking coincidence. After Saul had been called to the kingdom by God, a command had been given him, to utterly destroy the Amalekites, whose idolatries and licentious morals would corrupt the children of Israel, unless they were clean blotted out. Saul had marched against the Amalekites, but he had not done what he had been commanded. It was his first act of disobedience. The face, the voice of the Amalekite as Saul leaned on his spear, were to him an announcement that his first sin had found him out.

"The Lord is departed from thee," said Samuel, "and is become thine enemy . . . . the "Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, "and given it to thy neighbour, even to David; "because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, "nor executed his fierce wrath upon Amalek."

There lived long ago a great saint, a man full of the love and fear of God, who spent his whole life from childhood in the service of God. I mean S. Bernard. But once in his life he did a

grievous wrong; he wanted a certain bishopric that was vacant, for a relation. Someone else was chosen for the bishopric, but Bernard set to work diligently to rake up stories against this harmless, good man, and to continue circulating them, after he had been assured on the best authority that these stories were not true. He managed to get the election quashed, and his relation made bishop instead. It was a great fault in so holy a man.

Many years after when he was very old, he came to die; and who do you think stood over him, held his dying head on his arm, and closed his eyes? That bishop for whom he had done the great wrong. As he died, the one great sin of his life was brought visibly present before him.

An uncle of mine, when a boy at school, was very nearly drowned. He has often told me that at the moment when he was losing consciousness, every act of his past life rushed before his mind with startling clearness. It was not that they were remembered by him one by one with an effort, but that they all seemed at the same moment to stand before him, distinct in all their relations.

The same thing has been told me by one who

was nearly hung; he had been tying a rope in a tree, when his foot slipped, and the cord became looped round his neck. Accidentally he was found, and cut down before dead. He also told me that in one moment, he saw everything he had done, as it were, visibly before him.

Well, my dear brethren, it is a fact that we shall all of us see all our acts unfurled before us, perhaps directly the soul is parted from the body, certainly when we are judged.

We shall see everything we have done, perfectly, plainly, in all their unveiled reality, however now cloaked with excuses, and hidden away, buried in forgetfulness.

When you have done an act, good or bad, you have not done with it for ever. As you part from it you may say to it, "We shall meet again." All you have done in childhood, in youth, in middle age, which you look back at with such calm composure now, as though it no longer matters, it was done so long ago, you will meet again You will see what the consequences of these acts were. Acts done by you thirty or forty years ago are producing their fruits of good or evil to-day. What your acts have done, that you will know when you meet them again face to face.

Oh! my friends, is not this a terrible thought. Surely your sin, it is said, will find you out. Aye, so it will. It will creep to light at the judgment day; and you will cry with dismay as you see it confronting you, "Hast thou found me "O mine enemy?"

All our wrong doings remain waiting to meet us, unless blotted out by a true repentance, and even then, there will be the consequences to answer for. As the years pass by they do not lighten the amount, any more than in a long unpaid score the earliest debts disappear.

Surely the thought, and it is a dreadful one, that we shall meet our acts again, that we shall have to face them, and give an account of them, ought to hold us in constant check, ought to make us very wary, and very watchful.

What self-deception will be cleared away when we see our acts as they are, not as we choose to represent them to ourselves and to others! What despair it will cause, if we have lived all our life in a condition of ignorance as to their real character!

O! my brethren, look well to what you do, that you may not be ashamed, in the great and terrible day of the Lord, to meet your acts again

and pray with me, with all your hearts, "Lord, "for Thy tender mercies sake, lay not our sins to "our charge, but forgive that which is past, and "grant us grace to amend our lives; to decline "from sin, and incline to virtue; that we may "walk with a perfect heart before Thee now and "evermore."

SERMON III.

FIXITY OF PRINCIPLE.

(THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.)

ST. MATT. XI. 7.

"A reed shaken with the wind."

THERE was, in olden times, a great commercial city named Tyre, in Palestine, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The ships of Tyre sailed over that great inland sea, bearing her merchandise to Greece and Italy, the north of Africa, and Spain; and even, perhaps, to our own Britain, whither they carried their purple, and crimson, and blue manufactured stuffs, and whence they drew their supplies of tin.

Tyre was noted, not only for its ships, but also for its dyes. The Tyrians had made a great discovery, they had found out how to stain woollen and linen cloth, rich colours, from blue, through all shades of purple, up to blood crimson. The secret was closely kept, and as no other nations knew how to produce these colours,

they were ready to pay very high prices for the dyed goods of Tyre ; just as now the Ashantees will give gold-dust for Manchester printed cotton goods.

Like all great commercial cities, Tyre was speculative, venturesome, and not scrupulously honest. We have heard lately how in China great mistrust has arisen with regard to Manchester cotton sheetings, for it has been found that they have been dressed with pipe-clay to make them look stiff and weigh heavy. And after a voyage they become covered with mould-spots, and when washed, the pipe-clay washes out and leaves the staple rotten. During the American war between the north and the south, a government order from the north came to a certain place which I will not name, for so many thousands of blankets for the army. That place is pretty well known among commercial men for its "shoddy." Shoddy is dust. Old clothes are put into a machine which tears and beats them into a fine dust. Now while cloth or flannel is being woven in the manufactories, there is a machine which dribbles shoddy on to the warp and woof, so that the dust is woven in with the staple. It is, of course an immense economy to

the manufacturers, and the buyer pays for cloth when he is buying dust held together by a few fibres of wool. That is why cloth and flannel now do not last as they used to in olden times. *Then*, they were made all throughout of good wool, *now*, they are made of a little staple and much dust.

Now the order came to one of the firms in the aforesaid town, which was not very scrupulous. The blankets were made of the least possible amount of fibre, and the greatest possible amount of dust. When the blankets arrived at New York, I was informed they had all shaken into piles of dust, and had to be spaded into wheelbarrows and so conveyed away.

Have you ever put a bit of black silk into your mouth? If you have, you have probably remarked how sweet it tastes. I will tell you why. When the silk is made, it is dipped in vats of melted sugar. This thickens the silk, and makes it very heavy. Twelve pounds of good silk, when thus dressed, weighs twenty-five pounds. Ladies see the splendid thick silk which they think must be durable, and having been told by their mothers that the cheapest dress is a good black silk, for it lasts during

any number of years, pay from £12 to £15 for a black silk dress, and find to their dismay that after wearing it two or three times, it tears to pieces. The fact is, they are wearing a dress of sugar candy and not of silk. Imagine the profits of the manufacturer! I dare say there was much sharp practice, and great commercial roguery at Tyre in olden times. If there is such roguery among Christian manufacturers, you may depend upon it heathen ones were not more virtuous.

Now the prophet Ezekiel, in the 27th chapter, has a long account of Tyre, and the ruin which God has pronounced upon it. He describes it under the similitude of a ship. He likens Tyre to a beautiful vessel which the ship-wrights have completed and launched for trading purposes. He gives a very curious description of a ship, and throughout, as a parable, he is alluding to the merchant-city Tyre, and its fortunes. He speaks of its sides being made of the fine resinous firwood of Senir. As for masts, they were of the cedars of Lebanon. Ancient vessels were provided with a great number of rowers who sat on benches, between decks, and rowed, when there was no wind to fill the sails. The prophet

says that the benches of the rowers were of ivory and the oars of oakwood from Bashan. The sails were of fine linen with embroidered work from Egypt; and the awning over the deck as protection against the sun, was of blue and purple. The wisest men were in her to look out lest she should spring a leak, so as to calk her. She was filled with tried soldiers to protect her; and abundance of goodly merchandise; food, lambs, and rams, and goats, were brought into the vessel to feed the crew, and soldiers, and passengers. Everything that could be thought of, apparently, was there; everyone who could possibly be wanted was there also, calkers, and pilots, and mariners, and soldiers, and those who looked after the merchandise. So the goodly ship was floated, and freighted, and manned, and started on her first voyage. The rowers bent on their oars, and the ship flew over the dark blue waters curling with white crested wavelets merrily as a bird that starts from its nest. She was "very glorious in the midst of "the seas." Still the wind kept blowing steadily. She had been skimming with wide white sails before the wind, floating onwards swift as a sea-gull, when the wind freshened somewhat;

she ran aground, and there the ship was broken in the midst of the seas, by the very gale which was blowing from the right quarter, from the east. the very one best suited to bear her on her way. She runs ashore and is wrecked in sight of land.

"Thy rowers have brought thee into great "waters : the east-wind hath broken thee in the "midst of the seas. Thy riches, and thy mer-"chandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy "calkers, and the occupiers of the merchandise, "and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and all "thy company which is in the midst of thee, "shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day "of thy ruin. The waves (margin) shall shake "at the sound of the cry of thy pilots. And all "that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the "the pilots of the sea, shall come down from "their ships, they shall stand upon the land, "and shall cry bitterly, and in their wailing they "shall take up a lamentation for thee, and "lament over thee, saying, What city is like "Tyre, like the destroyed in the midst of the "sea?"

I dare say you have wondered, How on earth is it that this well-manned, thoroughly sea-

worthy vessel, running before a favourable wind, which does not seem to have increased to a tempest, was thus run aground and wrecked within sight of land so speedily?

If you cast your eye over the account Ezekiel gives of the equipment of the vessel, I suspect you who are sailors will see that one most important article had been omitted when she was sent to sea. *There were no anchors.*

The vessel could not keep off shore before a steady east wind, because she had no anchors to let down, and the wind was too strong for the rowers to make head against it, though every sail was furled.

No vessel in the world could keep from wreck under such circumstances. Imagine the thought and labour employed to equip this beautiful ship, and the one important element of her safety omitted. You will see everything requisite for *making her go ahead* was supplied, but the thing necessary for *holding her steady* was forgotten.

Now this is the point I have been coming to, and I fear I have been a long time about it.

Just as the ship in the midst of the sea unvexed by storm, before a favourable breeze became a wreck because she was without anchors, so

Tyre, the great city of manufactures and commerce would fail, because she was without fixed principles ; her commercial morality was not based on right and wrong. So also with regard to our own selves, we may have everything we can wish, wealth, prosperity, and we may have calked our vessel against every wave, we may be supplied with every means of getting on in life, yet if we be without fixed principles, in the end we shall come to ruin.

What is that which is uppermost in parents' minds with respect to their children? Is it not how to train them to get on in the world? And this is to supply them with mast, oar and sail. Capital things. I have not one word to say against enterprise, energy in the prosecution of business, perseverance in work, in commerce, in venture ; only, do not start your children without anchors as well, that is, principles, to check them from running on reefs and sandbanks, and incurring wreck No amount of precaution, that is of mere human worldly precaution, can secure happiness and true prosperity where there is no right principle to check and hold firm those who are sailing before a brisk wind with land ahead. It was in vain for the Tyrian ship to have a cabin

full of calkers to stop leaks, when she had no anchor to prevent her from crashing on to a reef.

It is the want of an anchor which makes people in business overreach themselves. And so throughout life, unless there is fixity of principle there is always risk of wreck. Parents, before you start your children for the voyage of life, see that you supply them with good strict anchors. See that they have definite, sound principles which shall rule their moral conduct, and be ever ready to hold them in check when necessary.

How is it that a girl may go away from you into service, well supplied with what you think she may want, a keen eye to the main chance, a desire to push on, and better herself, and yet after a while she comes back in disgrace and shame? It is because you have not provided her with the anchor of sound principles She goes into service, her thoughts are only for herself, how she may dress, how little work she may do, how much money she may gain, how many eyes she may attract; and so the vessel runs with full sail set on a rock, and comes home a wreck.

How is it that young men go out into the world, and instead of sticking to their work, become idle, associate with bad companions, drink, and

finally lose their situations, and come down miserably in the world? They also have been started without anchors.

But there is one more case I must not forget. Some man has prospered all his life long. All his ventures have been successful, all his speculations have been profitable. He has got on well, with oars rowing and sails swelling; and yet he too is without anchors. At last death stands before him. That is the dark engulfing Goodwin Sands on which he runs. He cannot save himself, he had sown only to this life, he has had no hopes in the future, no treasure laid up where moth and rust do not consume, and thieves do not break through and steal, and when he falls on that sand bank all is swallowed up and disappears eternally.

SERMON IV.

SELF-SATISFACTION.

(4TH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.)

S. JOHN I. 22.

"What sayest thou of thyself."

IF you were to ask this question of almost every one, and to accept their own estimates of themselves, you would form the opinion that the world was full of the most estimable fellows possible. Take a man at what he values himself, and you will find that you have made great mistakes. Almost every one thinks himself the best, worthiest, truest hearted, most sensible, practical, clever fellow living. He may have done things which, to be sure, were not quite right, no doubt, but then—just look at So-and-so! "Thank God!" says our friend, "I never came down so low as that. And it is not every one who has had such provocation, such temptations as myself! It is

my belief that any one else who had been tried as I have been, would have done fifty times worse things than I did! Bless you! Look at me! There is not a man for fifty miles round so generally respected as I am."

Is it not so? Ask the next man you meet, or woman either, "What sayest thou of thyself?" and you will hear all his virtues, and not one of his failings.

A hungry man once caught and killed a nightingale that filled a grove with its song. A bird that makes so much noise, thought he, must be something. So he plucked it. And lo! it was no bigger than a sparrow.

"Ah!" said the man, "I see what you are. You are voice and nothing else."

So it is with not a few. They are full of vauntings, they talk of their goodness, their liberality, their zeal, their piety; the whole parish rings with the praises of themselves, which they warble so well. But pluck them, strip off all appearances, and you will find that they are "voice and nothing else." A great deal of talk, and very little action.

You will remember that John the Baptist, when he was in prison, sent his disciples to Our

Blessed Lord with a very similar question. They were to go and ask Him who he was, whether He was the one they had been led to expect, or someone else.

How do you think Our Lord answered this question? Did He enter into an account of Himself, and tell them who He was, that He was very God and very man, God of the substance of His Father begotten before the world, and man of the substance of His mother born in the world? Did He dilate on His sinlessness,—in Him we know was no sin, neither was guile found in His lips?

No! He answered the question by pointing to His works. "He said unto them, go your 'way, and tell John what things ye have seen 'and heard; how that the blind see, the lame 'walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the 'dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is 'preached."

You will see that He gives no direct answer. He points to the works He had wrought, and bids them form an opinion of what He is from what He has done, not from what He says of Himself. And in another place He says, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true,"

that is to say, "you know how worthless is the "account a man gives of himself, therefore I do "not give witness of myself."

A little girl who had gone through a churchyard, and had read the epitaphs on the tombstones, said, "Mother! where are all the bad people "buried." So if we were to ask folks of themselves, "What sayest thou of thyself?" we should be inclined to ask, "Where are all the "bad people?"

The fact is, no one likes to believe that he is a sinner, and has done evil in the sight of God, and has not attained that measure of perfection which is set before him. Instead of thinking what, with his opportunities and privileges he might have become, he only thinks how much better he is than most other people.

It is quite true that you come to Church, and kneeling—or, alas! too often sitting—you say to God "We have erred and strayed from thy "ways like lost sheep. We have followed too "much the devices and desires of our own hearts. "We have offended against thy holy laws. We "have left undone those things which we ought "to have done; and we have done those things "which we ought not to have done, and there is

"no health in us." But you do not mean it. Not for one moment will you allow that the words apply personally to yourself.

We is a convenient pronoun, it includes all the rest of the folk here assembled. I know very well that A has erred greatly, and strayed like a lost sheep. There is also B who is always following his own wishes, good or bad; there is C, who has to my certain knowledge broken some of the laws of God, and it is a lucky thing for him that the police have not been after him for breaking those of the realm as well. As for leaving undone those things which we ought to have done! There is D owes me half a sovereign which I shall never see again, and E has never attended to his farm duties as he was bound and paid for doing, and there is F who ought to have attended the Board of Guardians to protest against the wasteful expenditure of the poor rates; then as for doing things that we ought not to have done, G goes out shooting without a license, H steals wood, J has told, to my certain knowledge, a lie, K gets tipsy, L poured water over his barley before he sold it.

So he makes *we* include every letter except *I*. But do you think, my dear friends, that this

frame of mind is a wholesome one? Do you think that what you say of yourselves imposes on others? Or that all the world values you at the price you put on yourselves?

A man came once to an aged hermit in the deserts of Egypt, and said to him, "I hate sin "with all my heart." The old man looked doubtfully at him, and said, "I do not under-"stand hating generalities. Enter into details. "If you say, I hate my spiteful temper, I hate "my waywardness, I hate my habit of grumbling "at everything that occurs, I hate my selfishness, "I hate my acts yesterday so rude, so self-indul-"gent, so untruthful—Ah! then I understand "you."

At the Judgment day, my brethren, the question will be asked us, "What sayest thou "of thyself?" And then we shall see ourselves as we are, and shall have to give an account, not of what we believe ourselves to be, but of what we have *done*. Christ when asked who He was, pointed to His works. We, at the last day, when asked what we are, shall have to give an account of our works. "What sayest thou of "thyself?" Think of the awful feeling of standing before the great white throne, and of having

to answer that question truthfully; of having all our plausible excuses torn away, all our boasting silenced. "What sayest thou of thyself?" "I "have had opportunities, and I neglected them. "I was taught Thy commandments, and I did not "keep them; Thy laws, and I meditated not "thereon. I had plain duties set before me, and "I evaded or ignored them. I have lied, and "been dishonest, indolent, irreligious, wasteful, "worldly." And then, to have to enter into the particulars! To have to state what opportunities you have neglected. How many times you were invited to the Lord's table, and turned your back on it. How often you drank too much, how often you sold things underweight, how often you have sworn, what unseemly speeches have proceeded out of your lips, who were present, whether it fell on the ears of the young; and so on One by one, each, in all its particulars, will your acts be brought up before the Judge. And when the whole long list of sins of omissions, of things, that is, which you ought to have done, but which you have left undone, and sins of commission, that is of things which you ought not to have done, but which you have done,—when this long list is brought up before you

plainly, and you have had to confess them openly, shamefully, before all men, and the angels of Heaven,—then the Judge, in a terrible voice will say, "What sayest thou of thyself?" And you will fall on your face full of dismay, horror, unutterable woe.

"If we would judge ourselves we should not "be judged," says the Apostle. If, that is, we would only carefully look into our own lives, and after having invoked God's holy Spirit, examine ourselves as to what we have thought, and what we have said, and what we have done, and take all our misdoings in order and confess them humbly to God, with true contrition of heart, then we should not be judged for them at the last. For there would be no need, we should, in this life know ourselves as we really are. What has to be done at the Judgment Day is that the Judge shall dispel all the delusions with regard to our conduct in the midst of which we have lived here, in order that He may set before us our lives, our characters, our shortcomings, in their true light, and that then self-condemned we may acknowledge His justice in allotting us our future abode.

How wonderful is the power of self-condemnation. "If our heart condemn us," says S. John,

"God is greater than our heart, and knoweth "all things." It is as though he said, "Only "be truly humble, and see your actions in their "worst light, see what were the aggravating cir-"cumstances deepening the guilt; and then—"God is greater, more generous than our hearts, "He will see some extenuating circumstances, He "will value the contrition, the penitential tears, "and will forgive the offences."

I can not urge upon you too earnestly, the duty of examining your lives by a high standard instead of by a low one. We estimate ourselves by our neighbours, and not by Christ. Yet His life, and His law are the rule by which we should measure ourselves. We are called to be like Christ, we profess at our baptism to make this the aim of our lives. By that promise, by that pattern measure your actions, and then you will be able to give a true answer as you ask yourself the question, "What sayest thou of thy-"self."

SERMON V.

THE INCARNATION

(CHRISTMAS DAY.)

ST. JOHN. I. 14.

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

YOU see before sunrise first a pale white streak in the east, over the dark line of sea, whilst stars are still twinkling in the sky overhead; and then by degrees, as the light grows, trees and branches, which were before buried in darkness, you see stand out sharply against the whitening sky; the stars now disappear; and presently a little black spot darts up from the ground, and springing high aloft, sends down a glad shrill song, and all the bushes break out into twitters; the white rime on the bars of the gate and on the plough, begins to glisten, and over the sea rays of light rise up, and touch the clouds, which blush with joy, and then, lo!

they flame, and out of the waters rises a burning globe,—the sun is risen, it is day. Just as all this happens, so it was with Christ's coming. Long, long before He appeared on earth, the first faint streaks of light appeared. He spake to Abraham and gave him a revelation of the truth. Then the light brightened, Moses had a fuller revelation, and the Israelites who went up out of Egypt saw more clearly the truth than had Abraham and the old patriarchs. And perhaps you may have noticed how much more there is of Christ in the Psalms, than in any words of Moses, and again how much fuller and brighter grows the light in the Prophets as time speeds on and the rising of the day star approaches.

After the Prophets had done speaking, and the list of books forming the Old Testament came to a close, still the light was brightening, and the truth grew on men's minds, which were being prepared for the brightness of Christ's rising. You know that after you have been long in the light, you cannot endure to be suddenly brought into a brightly illuminated room. The light dazzles and hurts your eyes, you have to turn your face away, or go out and let your eye

get gradually accustomed to the blaze. So was it with the olden world, the eyes of men's minds were being gradually prepared by God to see the splendour of Christ, of God manifest in the flesh. He was opening their understandings by degrees, and little by little, that when Christ came, to Him they might look with undazzled eyes.

There was a Jew, named Philo, who was born from thirty to forty years before Christ, and who never knew and believed in Him, he lived in Egypt, and there he wrote many books in which he gives us the belief of the Jews, in Egypt, in his time. I have been much astonished in reading Philo s writings to see how the minds of the learned Alexandrine Jews were being prepared to receive Christ, how much of the truth they saw, though still through a glass darkly. I will read you some little bits from his writings, and you shall judge for yourselves.

In one place he says that it is almost impossible to know about God, and that there are many who are associated together in desire to know Him, "But," he adds, "they cannot know "God truly, unless they shall behold His image, "the most sacred Word." We are not worthy

yet to be called the sons of God, he says; yet we must labour to become so, and this can only be effected by imitating "the First-born, the Word, "who is the authority, and the name of God, "the Man made in God's own image, He who "watcheth over Israel. Even if we are not yet "suitable to be called the sons of God, still we "may deserve to be called the sons of His "Eternal Image, the most sacred Word, for the "Word is the Image of God."

In one of Philo's treatises on "Who is the "heir of all things," he likens all creation to the golden candlestick in the temple, which was composed of seven lights, three on each side and one in the midst, and that one central light which is to the others, as the sun is to the planets, which standeth in the midst of them, is, he says, the Word of God, by whom all things were created. It is impossible in reading Philo's account not to think of the vision of St. John in which he saw Christ standing with a countenance like the sun in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Nor can we fail to recal' Our Blessed Lord's words in which He, the Word, declared that He was the trne bread that came down from Heaven, to give life unto the world,

when we read in Philo that He is "the Manna, "the heavenly incorruptible food of the soul."

In a wonderful passage, Philo speaks of the Word as the mediator between God and man. "The Father who created the universe has given "to his archangelic and most ancient Word a "pre-eminent gift, to stand on the confines "between the created and the Creator. And "this same Word is continually interceding for "the race of men before the immortal God, "when it suffers affliction and misery. He is "the ambassador sent to mankind by the Ruler "of all. And the Word rejoices therein, and "announces it, saying, I stood in the midst, "between the Lord and you; being then "uncreate as God nor created as you, but being "in the midst between the two, as a hostage to "both parties; a hostage to the Creator, as a "pledge and security that the whole race would "never again entirely revolt, and to the creature, "to lead it to entertain hope that the merciful "God would not overlook his own work."

I might multiply citations, but these, taken haphazard from the book before me, are enough to show you how the cloudlets above the rising sun were glittering with light, how clearly the

truth of God manifest in the flesh was being revealed to men before Christ appeared on earth, and the angels announced with a burst of song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth "peace, good will towards men."

You may perhaps wonder why it is that St. John uses the expression "the Word" for our Saviour. He did so principally because the Jews in his time had already a belief in the divine Word being of the substance of the Father, issuing from the Father, being the manifestation of the Father, and he desired to show them that the idea they dimly saw, the truth they feebly grasped was to be found perfect in Christ Jesus. And the Jews had used this name for the revelation of God because it was the most expressive one they could find. God reveals Himself to man; He revealed Himself to Abraham, and to Moses, and to the Prophets. How did He reveal Himself? Through the Word. As we make known our thoughts to others through the vehicle of speech, so God made manifest the truths, which He desired men to know, through the great mediator, Him who stood between God and man, and Him they called therefore the Word.

The Jews of Palestine when Christ came could no longer understand their old Hebrew language, so they had translations of the Old Testament read in their synagogues, and it is a curious fact that in the earliest of these translations that we have, whenever it is said in the Hebrew Scriptures that God appeared to any of the patriarchs, in the translation it is said that the Word appeared.

Jesus Christ, born this day, the Word of God made flesh, is the means of communication between God and man. Through Him God speaks to us, and through Him we have access to the Father.

He that was afar off, is now made nigh, God and man are united in Christ Jesus.

"God who at sundry times and in divers "manners, spake in time past unto the fathers "by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken "unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed "heir of all things, by whom also He made the "worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, "and the express image of His person, and "upholding all things by the word of His power, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat "down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Christ, the living Word, St. Paul tells us, is ever with us, ever at hand to be our instructor and support. "The Word is nigh thee, even in "thy mouth, and in thy heart." That Word which came down from heaven and was incarnate in Mary's womb, that Word who is the medium of communication between God and man is nigh us, even in our mouths. He who was not ashamed to humble Himself from highest heaven to the cradle of Bethlehem; who is the adored of angels, the express image of the divine Person, clothed Himself in the form of a little infant; who, upholding the worlds by the word of His power, suffered Himself to rest on Mary's knee; that same incarnate Word, how we know not, deigns to abase Himself still lower, and to come to us under the sacramental forms of Bread and Wine, that He may be, as St. Paul says, "even in thy mouth and in thine "heart."

Receive Him this day, receive Him into the cradle of thine heart sacramentally, He comes to reconcile thee to God, to teach thee the will of God, to be thy mediator, thy strength and thy guide.

That Word which was in the bosom of the

Eternal Father, and which revealed God to man, by glimpses only in olden time, came on earth in our nature, to dwell for ever amongst us; and He deigns of His infinite love and mercy to draw very nigh thee, and to enter even into thy mouth and into thine heart.

What was hid from the wise and prudent is revealed unto babes; that which the wise of old saw but darkly, we see clearly, these precious privileges which were denied to them are offered to us. O! that we may worthily receive them, and that the Word, admitted into our mouths and hearts may dwell there ever by faith.

SERMON VI.

EMMANUEL.

(SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.)

MATTHEW I, 23.

"They shall call his name Emmanuel; which being interpreted, is, God with us."

In the old heathen times men, penetrated with the belief in the existence of God, and desiring to worship him, made to themselves idols to which they could address their supplications, and before which they could offer their worship. They followed a natural instinct, idolatry was an appeal to God, it was a great cloud of prayer wafted up to heaven.—Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us.

It is quite true that God is everywhere present, that he is in heaven, in earth, in sea, that he is before, behind, beneath, above us, aye, and within us also; this is an axiom of reason and an article

of faith. "Whither shall I go then from thy "spirit; or whither shall I go then from thy "presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art "there: if I go down into hell, thou art there also. "If I take the wings of the morning and remain "in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also "shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall "hold me. If I say peradventure the darkness "shall cover me, then shall my night be turned "to day."

That God is everywhere present every instructed heathen as well as every christian believes, it is of the nature of God. That union with Him is available to the devout in all places, and at all times, natural religion and Christanity alike teach. Nevertheless man is not satisfied. Man wants to fix his attention on some one point, to have a sensible presence of God, to which he can turn as to a centre of devotion. Idolatry was an appeal to God, and God's answer was the Incarnation. It was as though man had cried out "I believe that thou art infinite, that thou art "extended through immensity, and incomprehen-"sible by the mind of man, but I cannot fix my "heart on infinity, I cannot worship immensity, "I cannot love what is incomprehensible." It

was as though God had answered. "Be it so, "lo! I come. I, the infinite, take limitations upon "me. I, who am everywhere present, condescend "to localize my presence, I, who am incompre-"hensible, become an objective personality, I "know that man cannot love the abstract God "of reason, and I become Man to give men an "object on whom they may expend their love for "the ideal of all that is good, and true and "beautiful."

God took flesh in the womb of Mary. He was among men for thirty-three years; Emmanuel to the shepherds of Bethlehem, to the magi, to the disciples by the sea shore, to the multitude in the wilderness, to the poor and ignorant on the mountain top. They had God among them, that they might derive from Him grace, strength, and moral law; they had Him among them that they might worship Him and pray to Him, and rejoice in the light of his presence. Then he died on Calvary, was buried in the garden, rose, was seen for forty days, and went up into heaven and a cloud concealed Him. God was withdrawn from sight. Did He cease to be Emmanuel? Was He God with us for thirty three years only? The whole world before His coming had cried out

through the stuttering lips and barbarous language of their idolatry and sacramental rites for the presence of God. Was God's answer to be for thirty three years only? As the scroll of this world's history unrolls, is the event of Christ's coming to disappear in the far off past, dwindling in lustre as the dust of ages accumulates upon it? Is our faith to be historical belief only? are we to hold the doctrine of God's presence with men as a thing of the past, like the flood, the call of Abraham, or the release of Israel from Egypt?

If so, God's answer to man would be of little worth. For generetion after generation succeeds and inherits the same needs, feels the same cravings, cries out for the satisfaction of the same wants, as did their forefathers. An historical incarnation does not meet all man's requirements. God made flesh two thousand years ago is a fact of the past, interesting to the religious antiquarian, but of no practical importance to the Christian.

No, my brethren, God is still our Emmanuel, Christ is still present with us. The Incarnation was a descent of God to the level of human necessities; man wants the presence of Christ as much now as he did two thousand years ago; he

wants Christ not merely on paper, but living, in fact, as a person in the midst of His Church

We believe that He is with us still in several sensible, objective methods. He is present in the poor for a special purpose, that through them we may exhibit our love and tenderness to Him. "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was "thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, "and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; "sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and "ye came unto Me. Verily I say unto you: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the "least of these my brethren, ye have done it "unto Me."

When Saul persecuted the Christians, Jesus reproached him with these words, "Saul, Saul, "why persecutest thou Me?" What was done to the members of the Church was done to Him.

I pray you understand this doctrine, for it lies at the root of all Christian charity and self-devotion to the poor, every act of tenderness shown to them is really offered to Christ himself, they are his suffering members, through whom He receives our love. He has then a Real Presence for that purpose in His poor.

Christ has also a Real Presence in every

Christian through all ages, as moral perfection. There is not an act of charity, of heroism, of self-denial, of purity, which is not the result of His permanent action ; so that every man leading a good life is a supplementary gospel of the Incarnation. Thus the Incarnation, as regards the moral life, is not a thing of the past but of the present As a means of conveying moral force also, *i.e.*, Grace, it is not a thing of the past, but of the present. Christ lives on in His Church as the Grace-dispenser.

The gospel of His life is ever taking new forms and fresh developements, in the patriot, the resolute explorer, the emancipator of the slave, the political reformer, it was not run out at His Crucifixion ; wherever there is a moral beauty, dignity, heroism, it is an aspect of Christ's life working out in his members throughout the Church.

And as his moral garment is of many colours, so is that of His grace, which nourishes the moral life. In a thousand ways, through the voices of men, through the press, through art, through whatever is beautiful in act, and noble in conception, He breathes the stimulating force into the souls of men.

But especially does He do so through those consecrated channels which He historically in person, or mystically, through His Church, has instituted.

It is thus that Christ is in all the Sacraments our Emmanuel, the Grace-giver. They are not forms only, but forms through which He works, just as force operates through matter. As we have a body formed of the dust of the earth, as well as an animating soul, it is according to analogy that a sacrament should be formed on the like principle, and be adapted to the needs of creatures with both material and immaterial natures, body and soul.

And now we come to worship.

It is true that God is everywhere present, but it is also true that incarnate God, is at times in particular places ; He was in the manger, in the boat, on the mountain, sitting on the well.

So now is He specially present as God incarnate in particular spots, at particular times. He comes to our Churches and to our Altars in the Holy Eucharist. As the virtuous man is the perpetuation of Christ's moral life, as the Sacraments generally are the perpetuation of Christ's grace-giving, so is the Eucharist a

prolongation of Christ's presence among us in His royal state, to receive our homage.

It is for this that we adorn the sanctuary, that we deck the altar.

The tender lavishing of all that is costly and beautiful on the adornment of an altar and the glorification of the Holy Eucharist is to many waste and folly.

Of what value is the little bunch of forget-me-nots the child gathers on its way home from school, and which it presents to its mother? It is not the money value of the bunch of blue ribbands that is brought home from the fair that makes the young girl esteem them; it is because they are a token to her that she has not been forgotten; so the flowers are esteemed by the mother, not for their worth, but because they are a sign that her little one has thought of her when away from home.

All little gifts of affection are esteemed for the love that prompts them, not for their intrinsic value. So is it with the homage we render to Christ, the offerings we make, however poor, and humble they be,—the cracked voice of the old woman singing her hymn, the light dusting of the sanctuary, the flowers or evergreens wreathed,

they may be nothing in themselves, but the Lord Jesus Christ accepts them, because prompted by love.

Why do we build costly Churches, and adorn them suitably? Because they are shrines of Emmanuel, the houses into which Jesus deigns to enter. Why do we adorn the altar with velvet and gold? Because it is the throne of our Incarnate God. Why do we burst forth in song with organ note accompanying? Because we are greeting Jesus, the Son of David, who passeth by.

"Lo!" said He, "I am with you always, even "unto the end of the world." He has kept His promise. Sacramentally He is still in our midst, receiving our praises, our worship, our offerings, though the worldlings without faith see Him not, "He goeth through the midst of them, and so "passeth by."

SERMON VII.

THE WILL OF GOD.

(NEW YEAR'S EVE.)

HEBREWS X, 7.

"Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God."

IT is a harmless custom in some churches, I believe, for people to assemble for service in the evening, and wait till midnight, so as to see out the old year, and see the new one in. It is not a custon sanctioned by the Church formally. Indeed there is but one allusion in the Prayer Book to the feast of the Circumcision, as being New Year's Day, and that is in the rubric which orders that the collect of the Nativity shall be said continually until New Year's Eve.

The Christian year begins with Advent Sunday. New Year's Day, the 1st of January, was a heathen festival in ancient times, kept with revelry and all sorts of abominations, so that in the homilies of the Fathers of the Church down to the eighth century, as the "Feast of Satan and Hell," all the good Christians are cautioned against

observing it. All participation in the festivities of the day was forbidden by two Councils of the Church, one at Constantinople, in A.D. 692, and another at Rome in A.D. 744.

One of the early bishops of Rome, named Gelasius, forbade all observance of the 1st day of the year, religious or otherwise, in hope of rooting out every remembrance of the pagan ceremonies which were connected with it, A.D. 496. It was not till very late that the Church dared to allow the day, as the feast of the Circumcision, to be observed with any solemnity. There is not much fear of our keeping the New Year's birth with unseemly revelry, so that no objections of the sort which troubled the early Church need hamper us. At the same time it must be remembered that the New Year of the Church does not begin on January 1st, but on Advent Sunday. January 1st is the day on which our commercial affairs begin anew, we open fresh accounts with our grocers, and butchers, and bakers; we pay the bills of the past year up to December 31st and begin new bills with January 1st. So also our bank accounts are made up to December 31st, and new accounts open with January 1st. With the New Year we

change perhaps our newspaper, or the magazine we receive. So thus January 1st has its importance in our business affairs, and it is natural that we should somehow connect it with religious affairs. It is quite natural, especially to those who are in business, and take stock of their goods at the close of the old year, that they should like to take stock of their religious condition on December 31st It is a perfect harmless fancy, and may be useful. Certainly the Church will not object to anything which is liable to do good, and which can do no possible mischief.

So now, let us try to make some use out of this fashion which has sprung up among some folk.

"Lo," said our Blessed Lord, in prophecy, "I "come, in the volume of the book it is written of "me, To do thy will, O God."

In the volume of the book. In olden times books were not made out of sheets of paper, folded into four, or six, or eight, or twelve, and so forming one compact volume, with page following page from beginning to the end, from left to right as now. A book was made of one very long strip of papyrus or parchment, rolled like a window blind on a roller. Or rather, let me say, it was on two rollers, one roller was

attached to the top of the strip, the other roller was fastened to the bottom. The strip of parchment or paper-rush was many yards long.

The book began at the very top of the long strip. There were no pages and no turning over of the leaf, but the reader read straight down the strip, his book was written all over the yards of material. As he read the top lines, he turned the top roller, and it rolled them up, and unrolled some more of the material with the writing on it from off the bottom roller. And when the reader had come to the end of the book, he had rolled it all off the bottom roller on to the top one. When he began his book it was all rolled on to the bottom roller.*

When the words "volume of the book" are used, it means the roll of the book. A long book of several volumes was a book in several rolls. Our word volume is a Latin word, and means a roll, such as a roll of calico or cloth at the drapers. This word was used before books were made as they are now, in blocks; when the fashion of making books changed, the old name remained on, though it

* I am of course speaking of Greek and Latin books, not of Hebrew ones, which began at the bottom, and was unrolled from the lower roller on to the upper one.

really applied only to books in rolls.

When it is said by Christ of His life, "Lo, I "come, in the volume of the book it is written of "Me, to fulfil thy will, O God," it really means, "Lo, I come, to do Thy will, so it is written at "the head of the scroll.' At the head of every volume was written the title of the book. Now Christ is speaking of His life as if it were a book. As the title and heading of His life is this text, "I am come to do thy will, O, my God!" Many a book opens with a quotation which gives the key to the meaning of the book, just as a text stands at the head of a sermon. You may have seen how every chapter in Sir Walter Scott's stories begins with a piece of poetry, a quotation from somewhere or other, and it has reference to all that follows.

So the text, the heading of the chapter of our Lord's life, is "I am come to do Thy will, O God." From the beginning of His life till His ascension into heaven, He was doing the will of His Father. When sitting among the doctors, He said to His mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about "my Father's business?" Why was He born? S. John answers, "He was born, not of the will "of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Jesus said of Himself, "I seek not mine own

"will, but the will of the Father which hath sent "me." "I came down from Heaven not to do "mine own will, but the will of Him that sent "me." "My meat is to do the will of Him "that sent me, and to finish His work." When He was in His agony in the garden, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if "it be possible, let this cup pass from me; "nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." The prayer He taught His disciples to use continually was, "Thy will be done on earth as it is "in heaven." When He died, He bowed His head, and said, "It is finished." What was finished? His work of fulfilment of the will of God through suffering.

From infancy to death this was the text out of which the great sermon of the Life of Christ was spun, "I am come to do Thy will, O God." It stood at the head of the page, of the volume. And now the secular year begins, and it begins with the obedience of Christ. He submits to be circumcised, to become obedient to the law for man, that He might write on the head of the scroll of the New Year, "I am come to do Thy will, O "God!" He writes this with His blood that all may read and take example.

Now you may see, perhaps, why it is, that so often throughout the Gospels reference is made to prophecies, to the inspired sayings of the holy men of old. They spake as they were moved of God, they uttered before-hand the will of God, and showed what was His design. When Christ came, He fulfilled the prophecies, He moulded His life according to the form laid down in the old writings of the law and the prophets, fulfilling both, because both were the utterance of God, the expression of His will. That was why He was born of a Virgin—to fulfil the will of God. Why He was born at Bethlehem—to fulfil the will of God. Why He was circumcised—to fulfil the will of God. Why He fled into Egypt—to fulfil the will of God.

"At the head of the scroll it is written of Me, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." That text which Christ wrote with His blood on His whole life, He has set upon you. When you were baptized, you put on Christ, you were sealed to Him, to His service; you took a covenant on you, not to do your own will, but the will of Him that sent you. At the head of the scroll of your life as a Christian is the same text written, "I "am come to do thy will, O God." It is the

maxim which should govern your life. Then, when it was written up for you, you promised and vowed three things, to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and to keep God's holy will and commandments.

When you were held over the baptismal wave, the priest asked, "Dost thou renounce the devil "and all his works, the vain pomp and glory "of this world, with all covetous desires of the "same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so "that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?" And by your sponsors you answered, "I renounce "them all." Again he asked if you would believe in all the truths contained in the Creed. By your sponsors you answered, "All this I "steadfastly believe." Again he asked, "Wilt "thou then obediently keep God's holy will and "commandments, and walk in the same all the "days of thy life?" And you answered, "I "will."

What was this, but the writing upon the head and opening of the scroll of your life, "I am "come to do thy will, O God?"

After a while you were brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him. He then asked you,—"Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this "congregation, renew the solemn promise and "vow that was made in your name at your "Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in "your own person, and acknowledging yourselves "bound to believe, and to do, all those things, "which your godfathers and godmothers then "undertook for you?" And you answered "I do."

What was this, but your writing up, with your own finger on the new page or chapter of life then opening on you, "I am come to do thy will, "O God?"

And now that the old secular year is at an end, and the new year for commerce and business affairs opens, make a resolve to serve God better in it than in the year that is past, to keep God more before your eyes, the fear of God more present, and to walk in His laws more carefully, to keep His will more exactly Make a good resolution, and write up over the new year, as it opens, at the very head of the scroll, the text that is to actuate you throughout the twelve-month, "I am come to do Thy will, O God."

SERMON VIII.

CHRISTIAN EQUALITY.

(CIRCUMCISION.)

PHILIP II. 7, 9.

"He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every Name."

THE eighth day after Christ was born, He was circumcised. The rite of circumcision was instituted by God as a token of man's sinfulness. Every male child shed a few drops of blood, and received a name at the same time.

On the first day of the New Year then, Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, submitted to this rite, and on that day was given the name which is above every name, the name at which things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth must bow.

Christ Jesus was God of God, Light of light, very God of very God, Begotten not made, of one substance with the Father; by Him all things were made. He took human flesh, and the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of a man.

It was a condescension of Almighty God to lie in the manger of Bethlehem amidst ox and ass in the stable. But here is a still greater condescension, that One who is sinless should submit to be esteemed as one born in sin, and a child of wrath; that He on whom the law weighed not, should voluntarily submit to its yoke, and undergo, the Just for the unjust, the rite ordained as a witness to the sinfulness of man. This act was of a piece with the crucifixion. Then He, the sinless one, suffered Himself to be nailed to the tree, to die as a felon, and now He, the sinless one, allows Himself to be wounded as though He inherited the sin of Adam.

Christ was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, He was conceived and born without the least taint of Adam's transgression; He was a lamb without spot, holy and undefiled.

Christ you see on this day condescends to rank Himself on the lowest level, to make Himself,

as the Apostle puts it, of no reputation, to take on Him even the form of a servant of sin.

Why is this? I will tell you one reason. He was about to become the head of the Holy Catholic Church, and the whole constitution of the Church is based on the unity and voluntary subjection of the members. That which Christ desired should be a rule in His Church, He taught by the example of abasing Himself to the level of sinful men. He would not make Himself different from the others, stand aloof, and be an exception to the rule. Obedience was what He inculcated, and with it, by His example He showed, that in His Church, in sacred things, in rites and sacraments all should share equally, for all are equal in the sight of God.

In the world there will be, there must be, always differences of position, degrees of rank and wealth, and the Church teaches the acknowledgment of such; indeed so does Holy Scripture. "Render," says S. Paul, "to all their due, "tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom cus-"tom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom "honour;" and again, "Let every soul be sub-"ject to the higher powers, for there is no power "but of God." We must not forget that the

differences of rank and station there are in the world are so by God's appointment; and if we owe respect and custom to those who occupy these positions, we do so in acknowledgment of the fact that they occupy positions allotted to them by God.

But in the Church, all souls are equally precious in the sight of God, and are open to receive equal privileges. This is a great truth which the Church has to insist on in the world, that all her members are equally dear to God. Every one who is baptized is equally regarded by the Church, whatever he may be. There is no difference of persons with God, and there is none in the Church. The king and the peasant, the prince and the pauper, meet in the house of God, and there find one level. There God bringeth down the mighty from their seat, and exalteth the humble and meek. The Church has but one form of words and rite for the baptism of the king's son, or the labourer's child. The priest signs each with the same symbol of Christ crucified, in token that each has, alike, the same warfare to fight against the same enemies, that each is enrolled in the same army, that to each alike is extended the same covenant, that for

each alike the kingdom of Heaven is the prize, if the battle be bravely fought out.

In the great volume of the book of the names of the children of God, the name of the poor babe shivering in its mother's tattered shawl, and that of the princely infant swathed in gold brocade stand side by side, "For by one Spirit "are we all baptized into one body, whether we "be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or "free," and, praise be to God! there is no respect of persons with Him, for we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and receive in our bodies the reward of our works, and rank hereafter according to their amount and excellence. One star then will differ from another star in glory, they that have done much for God shining brightly, they that have sinned grieviously, and yet, at the last have turned and repented, shining with dimmer lustre.

Again, look at the kneeling communicants at the altar. Hath God respect of persons there? Does the Church administer in one way to the wealthy, and in another way to the poor? God forbid. The Lord is the maker of them all. In the Church at least they shall kneel side by side on the same step, and receive alike the highest

gift, administered to each alike with the same words. In a well ordered Church every seat should be free, there should not be a comfortable pew, lined with green baize, and furnished with soft cushions and a fire-place, for the rich, and a few mean benches, bare and uncomfortable, in a draughty place near the door, for the poor.

The same principle exists in every service of the Church. When the Prince of Wales was married to the Princess of Denmark, what were the words addressed to them by the Archbishop who performed the ceremony? Was it—Will it please your Royal Highness to have this Princely Lady to thy wedded wife? Not so. It was plain "Albert Edward wilt thou have this "woman to thy wedded wife?" and "Alexandra "wilt thou have this man to thy wedded hus-"band?" Just the same address as would be spoken to any Tom and Jane in any rustic church, when two poor young folk come to the altar, to take one another, for better, for worse, till death them do part.

And when a Queen kneels to be churched, does the priest pray, "O Lord save her gracious "Majesty?" No. "Save this woman, thy ser-"vant." And when, lastly, earth is committed

to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust, the priest and those who stand at the open grave pray, whether the deceased be brought in a shabby deal coffin, at parish cost, from the workhouse, or whether he be in the crimson velvet cased coffin, emblazoned with the coronet of a Royal Prince, I say the priest prays and blesses God for him, be he what he may, as "our dear "brother here departed." There, in the grave yard, the king, or the noble, is the dear brother here departed of the parish priest, and clerk, and sexton.

The Catholic Church esteems every soul bought with the blood of Jesus as noble, as equally precious in the eyes of the eternal Father.

And now I bid you ponder well on this fact. It is a startling one. It is one which the old heathen world could not abide to hear, one, the thought of which lashed the old Roman despots into fury. The greatest of the philosophers of ancient heathendom could not rise to the idea of the equality of all men in the sight of God, of the preciousness of each individual before Him. He argued that some men and women were created to be slaves, that masters might whip and kill them, and buy and sell them, as cows

and sheep are made to serve the market.

I bid you then ponder on the great dignity of your position. You are not, you, and you, and you, whoever you are—as the vulgar expression is, common people. Common people! God forbid! What God hath chosen, and cleansed in the precious blood of Jesus, that call not thou common. And are we not all,—all who have been made members of Christ by holy baptism, are we not all, as the Apostle Paul says, "a "chosen people, a royal priesthood, a peculiar "people." Have we not all "put on Christ."

A Roman Emperor had a doe. He fastened a silver collar round its neck, on which was engraved, "I belong to Cæsar," and the doe ran about the streets, and gardens, and squares of Rome, and none dare hurt her. And we, my brethren, are made members of Christ, and children of God. "I belong to Christ" each one of you may say. "Let none despise me. "Let me not despise myself. Let none injure "me. Let me not wrong myself. Beware how "by bad example you wound me. And let me "keep my body in temperance, soberness and "chastity. I am not my own, I am bought "with a price. I bear on me the mark of my

"Master, signed at Baptism. I belong to "Christ."

A man of rank and family will often shrink from doing what is mean and disreputable for fear of dishonouring his name and family. Should we not also hold aloof from doing that which is wrong, that which is base, from falsehood, dishonesty, and what is immodest in dress, or act, or word, lest we should shame our family, the family of the Church, lest we should drag into the dirt the name by which we are called, the name of Christ.

Now, in conclusion, one more lesson. Christ teaches us by His circumcision the great moral of submission one to another. There is no dishonour in submission. Submission has been ennobled by Jesus Christ. "He who thought "it not robbery to be equal with God, took on "Him the form of a servant." He became obedient to the Jewish ceremonial law which did not truly bind Him. He who became the servant of all had no higher title to confer on His Apostles, the princes of His Church, than servants to His people.

There is then no dishonour in doing service to others. But if we consider that in the sight of

God all are one, that Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female are regarded with equal love by the God who made all, and the Saviour who redeemed all, there is, perhaps, a chance of forgetting that this Christian equality does not override and obliterate the differences in station, which are in the world, and that these differences also are of God's appointment, and therefore demand recognition.

"Though I be free from all men," says S. Paul, "yet have I made myself servant unto all." "Brethren," says he in another place, "Ye "have been called unto liberty; only—use not "that liberty for an occasion to the flesh; but "by love serve one another." Words echoed by S. Peter in his first Epistle. "So is the will of "God, that with well-doing ye may put to "silence the ignorance of foolish men, as free, "and not using your liberty as a cloak of mali-"ciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour "all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. "Honour the King."

SERMON IX.

FOLLOWING THE LIGHT.

(THE EPIPHANY.)

S. MATT. iii. 2.

"We have seen His star, and are come to worship Him."

I do not think that there is any history in the Gospel so strange, so singular in its beauty, as that of the visit of the pilgrim Magi. It has been a favourite subject with painters, and Christian tradition has loved to hand down to us particulars concerning it, which are not detailed in the sacred narrative. How far that tradition is to be relied upon I do not take on me to say; but where the common consent of ages has accepted certain statements as facts, we may well suppose that these statements reposed originally on good authority. Thus the number of the wise men has been almost universally regarded as three, their dignity has been thought

to have been princely or royal, and they have been considered to have belonged to three different races. That they were not all of the same race, is by no means improbable, if they came, as we are led to suppose, from Chaldæa, for three races of very different origin did meet and form a mixed population there.*

These wise men represented the Gentile world, the races sprung from Shem, Ham, and Japhet; in pictures you will see that one is represented pale and old, a second middle aged, with a somewhat darker complexion, and the third is a young man, black or dark brown. This is to show that all families of the earth, and all ages, were represented by those three wise men, who came to the feet of the infant Jesus, to pour out before Him their treasures, and kneel in worship.

They came, following a guiding star. The result was that it led them to Jesus.

We, too, have got Jesus as the object of our journey. This is the end of all, to see Him face to face, no longer through a glass darkly; to see Him as He is, not in poor mean guise, laid

* The original population of Chaldæa, the inventors of the cuneiform writing were Turanian. The Assyrian, a Semitic race conquered them. And there was an infiltration of the Iranian, an Aryan race.

in a manger, but in His glorious majesty, in the light and glory of His heavenly kingdom. The whole of our life is a pilgrimage,—a pilgrimage not unlike that of the Magi,

"O'er rugged wilds, or flowery meads,"

sometimes o'er dry waterless deserts, where there is no comfort; sometimes through pleasant places where we are tempted to linger and desist from our journey, sometime through storm, sometimes through calm, sometimes through darkness, at others in bright light.

To all Christians, from the moment that they start on their journey, Jesus Christ is the end to which they travel; nothing should make them forget to what they are making their pilgrimage, nothing persuade them to abandon their undertaking, or lead them to linger on their course.

I have met in Switzerland long trains of pilgrims bound for a distant shrine, a holy spot which they seek, and to which they travel in journeys of several days on foot. They walk straight on, with their prayer books in their hands, engaged constantly in their devotions, or breaking out at intervals into beautiful hymns. They turn neither to the right hand, nor to the

left, to see the sights along the road, the grand scenery of waterfalls and mountain lakes, nor the stately buildings, picture galleries, and museums in the towns. They tarry only for their meals, and for the night, and directly their necessary food and rest have been taken, they go straight forward again. There is no pleasure-taking, no dissipation, no tittle-tattling by the way, but all pray and praise, and keep the object of their journey ever before the eye of their minds.

So should be our pilgrimage through life to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. We should use this world and not abuse it, be instant in prayer, for everything give thanks, and never, never lose sight for one instant of the truth, that it is to Jesus that we are journeying, to Him who is perfect, and who hateth iniquity, and that our work is to make ourselves like unto Him.

What is the signification of the star? The old world had its star leading it to Christ, a guiding light which, when followed, brought it to the manger at Bethlehem, to accept the truth of the Incarnation.

The light which led the wise and good of the

old heathen world was the *natural reason.* The natural reason when listened to shewed to men that the gods of the heathens were but idols, sticks and stones, which had eyes and saw not, noses and smelled not, feet and walked not. It shewed them that the gods worshipped were no gods, for they were represented as malicious, jealous, impure. It shewed them that there could not be gods many and lords many, ruling creation. It shewed them that there must be a God, one, eternal, all wise, infinitely holy, loving unto men, very merciful. Some of the old heathen philosophers were drawn to the very threshold of the truth, by following the star of their natural reason. They arrived at the conviction that God was one and good; but then, they asked, How can we approach Him who is almighty, infinite, and perfectly holy? How can the world learn the truth concerning Him? It will not listen to us, for it says that what we teach is guess-work, and so it is. He must come down in the likeness of men, and teach men, and make a way whereby men may reach unto Him.

And we Christians, have not we also a star to lead us? Certainly we have.

Now what is that we want to attain to? We want to arrive at a perfect knowledge of religious truth, and a perfect knowledge of moral truth, that is, we want to know what we must believe, and what we must do.

I was many years ago travelling among the Pyrenees. Our carriage had to go over a mountain, by a road which ran for a great part of the way along the edge of a frightful precipice. The rocks descended to a vast depth, and the river roared below out of sight. There was no wall or hedge on the side of the road. At the post house at the bottom of the pass we were given horses and a postman to drive them, and we started. Night fell before we reached our destination, black with heavy clouds, obscuring the stars. The horses were wild, unbroken-in colts, and they plunged from side to side. Whether the driver had been drinking or had lost his head in the excitement I cannot say, but he was perfectly unable to control the horses. They dashed from side to side of the road, and the carriage rocked, and the wheels grazed the edge. Every moment we expected one of the horses or the carriage to roll over the edge, when we should all have been dashed to pieces. I was

then a little boy, and I sat on my mother's lap. My father, not knowing the danger, had walked on from the post-house by a short cut over the mountains, to the inn at the top of the pass, where we were to spend the night. My mother prepared for her end. The horses were plunging and racing about, so that it was impossible to descend from the carriage. She kissed me, and bade me say my prayers, and her lips moved in prayer also ; I felt a shudder run through her at each sway of the carriage towards the edge.

All at once, above us, shone out a bright light. The postman shouted, the horses seemed to become less restive. A strong hand was laid on their reins, the carriage was stopped, and my father's voice was heard. He had arrived at the top of the pass long before us, and uneasy at the delay had walked down to meet us. The light we saw was in a window of the post house, set as a guide to travellers.

I cannot describe to you the relief, the joy, that rose in our hearts when we saw that guiding light, and when we heard the voice. We knew then that we were safe, following the ray of light we should reach our place of rest, guided by the firm hand on the bits of the untamed horses we

should be safe from being flung down the abyss.

Our course through life is like that mountain journey. Those wild undisciplined horses, ready to bring us to destruction, are our passions, the driver is conscience, the light is revealed truth, and he who meets us on our way and guides us is our heavenly Father.

Fixing our eyes on the light of Revelation, trusting to the hand of our Father laid on the bits of our passions, controlling them and guiding them, bidding conscience hold the reins, and keep temperate and wise,—so shall we attain to the place of our rest, to the home of God's elect, to the glory of the presence of Christ.

Now we have religious truth, and moral truth revealed to us; the truth which God calls on us to believe, and the truth which God calls on us to obey.

How and where are we to find revealed religious and moral truth? I answer by following the guidance of the Church. People wander from sect to sect, saying, What is truth. One says, Lo here is Christ! and another, Lo there! one says, the truth is this, and another, the truth is that, till folks are confused, and thrown into despair, and think that really there is no

knowing what is true. But consider, if God revealed the truth to the world He would fix it somewhere. It would not wander about here and there, and be broken up into sparks, and dance all over the country like will-o'-the-wisps. It must be fixed whole and entire somewhere to shine steadily for the guidance of men.

Of olden times on the coast of Cornwall there were wreckers. These men tied a lantern on the head of an ass, and drove the animal along the heights that fringe the shore. Ships at sea saw this light, and thinking them to be guides where open water was, ran towards them, fell on rocks, and were dashed to pieces. Then the wreckers came down to the shore, and took from the wrecked ship all that could be saved.

There are a host of these false signals about in the religious world, leading men to destruction. What then are we to do? Look to the lighthouse of the Church, built by the hands of Jesus Christ. In it He has set the clear, steady light of revealed truth. Steer for that, it marks the entrance to the port where is perfect safety, the harbour where you will be secure from every storm, where there are no reefs on which you will

be broken, no wreckers to despoil you of your treasure.

"Bright was the guiding star that led
With mild benignant ray,
The Gentiles to the lowly shed,
Where the Redeemer lay.

But, lo! a brighter, clearer light
Now points to His abode;
It shines through sin and sorrow's night,
To guide us to our God.

O haste to follow where it leads,
His gracious call obey!
Be rugged wilds, or flowery meads,
The Christian's destined way.

O gladly tread the narrow path
While light and grace are given!
For those who follow Christ on earth,
Shall reign with Him in heaven."

SERMON X.

THE DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN.

(1st Sunday after the Epiphany.)

S. Luke, ii, 52.

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Jesus Christ is the model of Christian boys and Christian men. Of His boyhood we know very little, but that little is enough to give us the outline of directions for the conduct of our children. I heartily wish it could be said of most of our children that as they increased in age and stature they increased also in wisdom; and not only in wisdom, but also in that piety which finds favour with God, and that politeness and readiness to oblige, which entails the favour of men.

If our children do not, then there is something wrong in our education of them. We must look to the boy Jesus, and try to fashion our children

to be like him. It is a duty incumbent on parents to do so, a duty which they will have to give an account of when Jesus Christ comes on the clouds of heaven to judge all men.

I am afraid that too often children are allowed to educate themselves anyhow, their parents exercising no control over them. They run in and out of the house just as and when they like, go to school when they like, when they like stay away picking blackberries; are allowed to escape from all parental restraint, become disobedient and a trouble to the neighbours. Instead of increasing in wisdom, as they might by attending regularly at school, they come off and on, learn nothing, do not acquire the habit of fixing their minds, and as they increase in stature increase only in love of idleness and mischief.

A child's mind is in an extraordinarily ready condition to drink in knowledge. Never throughout life is it so open to instruction, so able to learn without effort, as in childhood. Just as a little plant shoots up full of vigour in spring, and then comes almost to a standstill, so is it with minds, the power of growth is in the spring of life, in childhood. Waste that time, and it can never be recovered, learning in after life is a

difficult matter. But there is something more than mere learning which a child acquires by schooling. It gets a power of concentration of attention, that is, it learns how to fix its mind on one object, and bring all the powers of its thought to bear on this one matter. Now without this habit of concentration, nothing great can be done, the mind will never grow and be worth much. The child will never become a clever workman in any branch of business.

There is something else that education does for the mind. It makes it flexible ; that is it enables it to turn to all sorts of things, and should one fail, take up with another. Little children are taught to dance on the tight rope, and twist their legs and arms about in the most wonderful manner, for performance in shows. Well, education enables a child to twist and turn its thoughts about in all directions. And this is a most important branch of education, for it makes a man thrifty, handy, and generally intelligent, and like a cat, he will always fall on his legs, wherever you may throw him.

Now perhaps you will see what I mean, when I say that a child should be made to increase in wisdom as he increases in stature. You parents

have got those little brains in your keeping, and you are bound to see that they do grow in wisdom. It will be a miserable thing if when your children are grown up, they look back on their childhood and say, "We might have been wiser and better "if only our parents had not neglected their duty, "and taken pains with us to see that we were "properly educated."

It will be a much more miserable thing for you, when you stand up before the judgment-seat of Christ, and are asked by Him why you did not value these precious little minds full of hidden powers, which you allowed to be stinted for life, because you did not see to their increasing in wisdom when the control of them was entrusted to you.

I have travelled in Iceland, and seen poor wretched little flowers there which I scarcely recognised as the same which grow tall and spread in beautiful bloom in England. They were nipped by icy blasts as they sprouted, and there they stuck. little stinted starvelings. When summer came they could no more grow, their energy was exhausted. Take care that it be not thus with the minds of your children.

Jesus increased in favour with God.

It is not enough if you see to the education of your children's minds. They have souls as well as minds. If they are bound to increase in wisdom, it is because that is a duty they owe to themselves. There are also duties which they owe to God.

They owe to God faith, love, and worship. Their souls need educating every bit as much as do their minds; you must see that the seeds of faith and love are sown in these little hearts. It is a rich soft soil, where the seed will spring up rapidly, if it be sown in spring. But wait till summer, and the clods are hard, or in autumn when it is too late to sow, and nothing can be done.

I wish that every father and mother would take the utmost pains to give a religious tone to the child's thoughts, would speak to it of God, would be careful to see that it says its prayers, that it says grace at its meals, that it has the fear of God always before its eyes. If only the religious tone be given in childhood, it will never wholly wear out. When acquired late it never so thoroughly enters into the system and becomes part of the texture of the soul as it does when woven with the web of the spirit in youth.

And then with respect to worship. God expects reverence with body and soul, for He is the Creator of soul and body, and He demands worship from both. Therefore you must train your children to give God praise with voice, and to bow the head, and bend the knee, and fold the hands in prayer, as well as to direct the little soul heavenwards.

Jesus increased in favour with man.

What is that which brings children into favour with their neighbours? Is it not courtesy, willingness to oblige, and the like. Everyone likes a civil child, and everyone dislikes a pert, impudent one.

A child has to be taught what is due to its seniors and superiors; to reverence and obey its father and mother, its pastors and teachers, and to be polite to everyone.

You know the English word *Gentleman*, but I daresay you do not know what it means. When Sir Samuel Baker was engaged on his expedition to suppress the Slave-trade in Central Africa, he met at Khartoum, on the White Nile, a Governor, a Musselman, who had been a little while in England, and he had carried away with him the impression that to be a "gentleman"

according to the English idea of the word was to acquire the grandest title in the world. And in his eagerness to approve himself one, he became, as Sir Samuel Baker says, a most perfect gentleman, there far, far away from true civilization, on the high road to the heart of Africa.

Now what is meant by our word "Gentleman?" It does not mean to be a rich man, a great landed proprietor, or to have a fine house and lots of servants.

I heard the other day of a nobleman who wanted to get some information out of a manufacturer, so he invited him and his wife to dinner. He was all complaisance to the guest, till he had sucked him dry as an orange, and then he never took any more notice of him. My lady not overpleased at having the manufacturer's wife there, —she was I daresay a not very refined woman,— did not speak to her once after dinner, but talked exclusively to her own daughters, leaving her guest sitting uncomfortable and humiliated, alone on the sofa. Now I should say that neither this lord nor her ladyship acted as gentleman or lady on that occasion, though rich and titled.

What does the term "Gentleman" mean? Why it means solicitude for the feelings of others,

thought for others, readiness to give honour where honour is due, to give up one's self, one's wishes, convenience, to make others comfortable and happy.

Now this is just what you can teach your children, as well as any wealthy or titled people. Thought for others, courtesy towards others, absence of self-assertion, is the most delicate refining acquirement open to every class, and sure to gain everywhere the favour of man.

With persons in the upper classes, this is made a matter of careful education, not always because it is right that children should grow up with these habits, but because if they did not acquire them, they would not be tolerated in society.

When I was a little boy, I know I was always obliged to rise up, if seated, when my father or mother, or any elder entered the room. I was taught never to interrupt conversation; when anyone came into the room to place a chair for him or her; to call my father, Sir; and to take off my hat to any gentleman and lady of our acquaintance.

When therefore now I come into a house, and find the children lolling in the easy chairs, and never moving to surrender them to their parents,

or rising on the entry of a visitor, or rushing past acquaintances without touching their caps, I know pretty well that in this house one great element of education is neglected, the child may be taught its duty to itself, and be increasing in intellectual wisdom, it may be taught to believe in God and pray to Him, and so be increasing in favour with God; but I see plainly enough it is not learning its duty to man, and so will never grow in favour with man. Everyone who sees it will say, What a badly brought up child! it will never get on in the world till it has had plenty of raps over its knuckles, and has had its ill manners knocked out of it.

See how the holy Jesus sat at the feet of the doctors of the law. He knew everything, because He was God; yet He did not parade His knowledge before them, but sat patiently listening to their poor knowledge, and asking them questions, appearing to interest Himself in what interested them, and to please them by asking them to instruct Him. And then when He went down to Nazareth, He was obedient to Mary His Mother, and to Joseph his foster-father, showing them due respect, and loving service.

If Almighty God condescended to submit Him-

self to the orders of a poor carpenter, and listen patiently to the instruction of ignorant rabbis, we may be sure that He expects us to lead our children to copy His example, and use the opportunities afforded us as parents to make our children, as they increase in stature, increase also in wisdom, and in favour with God and with man.

SERMON XI.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

(2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.)

S. JOHN, ii. 2.

"Both Jesus was called, and his disciples to the marriage."

THE time in which we live is one in which it behoves us to lay down very plainly before you the doctrine of Christian Marriage.

You know that you can be married at the Registrar's Office, in Colchester, or in your Parish Church. Some of you may suppose that the difference is not very great, a matter of a shilling or two, and of more or less trouble, but that marriage at one place is as much of a marriage as matrimony performed at the other.

To be married at Colchester, you would have to go there in a van, it would cost you eighteenpence there and back, and there would be the Registrar's fee, what it is I do not know. So on the whole, you think it is simpler, shorter, less

expensive to be married in your Parish Church.

Moreover, it is a new-fangled way, being married in an office; you are accustomed to seeing folk married in church, your parents were wedded there of old, so on the whole, you prefer matrimony in the Parish Church.

But these are very poor and unworthy reasons, and if they are the only ones you have, then it is high time that you should be taught the true reason why marriage in a Church is to be preferred to marriage in a Registrar's Office, and in what the difference consists.

The marriage contracted before the Registrar is indeed a true legal marriage, but it is not a Christian Marriage.

Now let me explain to you what Christian Marriage consists in.

Christ, the Great and Only Head of the Church, gives to His people Grace.

Grace is supernatural, divine help, to enable His children, His members, to serve Him in whatsoever state of life to which they may be called. He gives grace to enable all who are members of His family, His Church, to do their duties voluntarily undertaken, or necessarily devolving upon them.

For instance. Every child, born into the world, from the moment that its reason begins to awaken, is bound by certain duties. The baby soon learns that it has to exercise patience,—it can not at once have what it screams for, also obedience,—it must keep off the fender, and its fingers from playing with the match-box. Next it has to learn and practise forbearance, if it has little brothers and sisters. It must acquire unselfishness, not keep all its toys and sweet things for itself.

As the child grows older, other duties are impressed on it, truthfulness, good-nature, manliness, diligence, modesty.

Now these duties are not remarkably easy to acquire, and some men and women spend their whole lives without mastering them. There are idle men, and lying men, and cross-grained old women.

To help a Christian child to overcome its natural infirmities, and to be able to learn and practise its duties, God gives grace in Holy Baptism.

But when a young boy or young girl has to go out into the world, to leave the dear home, and fly away from the parent's nest; when children grow

big and strong, then you know they are exposed to temptations which did not trouble them when they were children romping about the door, or picking flowers in the hedge-rows. Moreover, they have new duties. They enter into new obligations as they go into service, they have to obey their masters and mistresses, to be strictly honest, and render an intelligent, conscientious service, whether master and mistress are at home or abroad. They enter into new society, they are thrown among new associates, older, perhaps than themselves, and ready, alas! perhaps to lead them astray. Now you can see for yourselves that boys and girls exposed to these new trials, entering on new duties, need an additional outpouring of divine grace, that is, of heavenly help.

Christ, loving these boys and girls, has provided this; and in Confirmation, that rite whereby they are made firm, or strong, He gives them just so much more of His strength as will be necessary for them in their new positions, new situations.

Now both of these times Grace is poured out on those who, whether they like it or not, are exposed to temptations, and enter on obligations.

But there are two other cases, in which we, of our own free will bring down on our shoulders fresh duties, fresh responsibilities.

Some men desire to become ministers in God's Holy Church.

Some men and women desire to enter on the estate of matrimony.

Nothing compels any man to become a deacon or priest ; and nothing obliges a man or woman to marry.

A child can not help growing older, but he need not become a priest, or a married man, unless he chooses.

So you see these are two conditions of life voluntarily undertaken, as the two other conditions, infancy and youth, are involuntarily entered upon.

But both these conditions are good and useful ones. If there were none who chose to be priests and bishops, there would be no Sacraments administered. If there were no people who chose to be married, the race of mankind would come to an end.

And each of these states entails on it grave responsibilities.

A minister of God has duties to perform, he is

answerable to God for what he teaches, for how he feeds his flock, how he deals out to them the Sacraments, and so on. And to help him to do this he needs the grace of God. Therefore, Christ gives His grace to such as desire to enter His ministry, by Ordination.

But now let us come to the point of Matrimony. Young people little think of the weight of new duties, obligations, cares, and responsibilities that are entailed by marriage.

Look at some of them?

The husband and wife are to some extent responsible for each others salvation. A bad husband may embitter the life of his wife, and make her position scarcely endurable; he may be a drunkard, and curse and beat her, he may treat her with insolence and neglect, yet she cannot escape her obligations. Whether he be good or bad, she is bound to him, she must learn to control her tongue and her temper, and by gentleness seek to win him.

Or a wife may be untidy, never have the house comfortable for her husband, when he comes home from his work, never has his meals ready in time, or nicely cooked. Her tongue may be sharp as a needle, his temper sour as vinegar.

Then he is sorely tried to leave his own fireside and seek a home in the public-house.

So you see man and wife may have a hard and very trying time of it, needing a great deal of the grace of God to keep them straight in the midst of sore trouble. But at any rate, they will have to accommodate themselves to one another's nature and character. Newly married young people often have their little quarrels; that is, because they do not yet know each other's ways thoroughly, and they do not like giving up their own ways to accommodate the other. Little squabbles may lead to very big ones, and to long estrangement, unless the grace of God be there.

Then, again, the married people have their children to rear. When the baby comes into the house it brings with it a host of responsibilities. To a great extent the future of that child depends on its nurture at home. Great mistakes are made in the education of children; parents may be too indulgent or too severe, and so spoil their children by making them either self-willed or sly. You know, I dare say, the story of the robber who was being conducted to the gallows, when he saw his mother in the crowd, and when she hurried up to kiss him, he bit her ear off. "If you had

"corrected me when I stole the first penny," said he; "I should not now be on my way to death. "You are answerable for my being a thief and a "murderer."

As you rear a child, so, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, he will turn out.

God gives you the child, and you are answerable to Him for the way in which it is reared. He expects that you will teach it to be truthful, honest, obedient, modest, devout. If you do not, then you will hear about it at the Judgment day.

Here then you see, are plenty of responsibilities devolving on those who are married, duties the husband owes to the wife, and the wife to the husband, and duties they owe to their children.

Now Christ has provided that those who take upon themselves these new, heavy, and important duties should not do so without help.

His Grace is sufficient for every condition; for the wife with the drunken husband, for the man mated to a vixen or a slattern, for the parents with all the reponsibilities entailed by a family, for the young people to help them to accommodate themselves to each others moods, and ways, and tempers, for husband and wife, that each may find married life not a hindrance

in the walk to Heaven, but, on the contrary a help.

Christ gives the requisite grace in the rite of Holy Matrimony, ministered by His priest, empowered by Him to bless in His name, and with the blessing to pour on the heads of those whom He makes one, supernatural grace, that is, help, to enable them to live together in mutual love and fidelity, and to assist one another in the way to Heaven.

Now then, what is marriage at a registrar's office? It is the union of a man and a woman who think to live together without God's grace, to be man and wife by law, but not as Christians.

How do you think Christ will regard such as set at naught this ordinance, who say by their acts, We will enter on this new condition without asking God to bless it, without obtaining from Him any help to enable us to fulfil the duties that devolve on us therein.

Marriage before a registrar must be allowed in this country for those who are not members of Christ's Church; for Jews, and infidels, and for those who have cut themselves off from communion with Christ; but it is a shocking thing

to think that those who have been baptized, and have put on Christ, in their infancy, should, when entering on a most important condition of life, put off Christ, and try to do without Him.

SERMON XII.

THE DUTIES OF MASTERS.

(3RD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.)

S. MATTHEW VIII. 9.

"I say to this man, go, and he goeth, and to another, come, and he cometh; and to my servant, do this, and he doeth it."

IT is commonly said that whenever mistresses of households meet, their first subject of conversation is the trouble they have with their servants, and the misdemeanours of those who do the work of the house for them.

In the kitchen, in the same manner, the unreasonableness, the caprices, the temper of the mistress is a constant subject of discussion.

The farmers grumble that their men do not work conscientiously, that if they are not always at their back, they talk instead of working; and the men grumble at their masters that they are given too much work, or tied down too closely

as to time, or not given their wages regularly, or not paid sufficient wage.

The mutual complaints, and the disaffection between master and man, and mistress and maid, have got into the newspapers, and so it is high time that the plain lessons of Christianity, with regard to the duties the employer owes to the employed, and for which God will hold him responsible, and the duties which servants owe to their master or mistress, and for which God will hold them responsible, — be plainly set before you.

If every one did his duty to everyone else, everyone would be happy and content. There is evidently, therefore, a neglect of duty somewhere, or there would not be such prevalent discontent.

Those who employ labour throw the blame on those whom they employ. They say, "Servants "are not what they were when we were young; "they are dressy, exacting, idle, have no interest "in the welfare of the house, care only how they "may better themselves, as they call it." Or, "Labourers are never now content. They do "not do half the amount of work that their "fathers did, and they ask twice as much wage."

On the other hand, servants say, "Mistresses "are so unreasonable now, there is no getting "on with them, they never seem to consider us "a bit, never lend a hand to lighten the work "when we are overwhelmed with the load, and "are always grumbling at us from morning "to night."

Or workmen say, "Our master no more cares "for us than he does for sticks; it is no matter "to him if we are ill, or old and past work. He "does not look after us and be with us as farmers "did in old time, and if we do not please "him, he casts us out of house and work at a "week's notice."

Now I believe there is fault on both sides. Masters and mistresses are not perfect, and workmen and servant maids are not perfect. There is something wrong on both sides, the blame does not attach to one class only. And I think some of the blame of this discontent arises from us, the Clergy, not having given plain enough instructions on the respective duties of master and man, and mistress and maid.

Please God, I will do my best to remedy the fault now, in this parish, by giving you very plain instruction on this matter.

And first of all we will take masters and mistresses ; let me tell them their duties.

On another Sunday I shall speak of the duties of workmen and servant-maids.

Whenever anyone is brought in contact with anyone else, at once a duty springs into existence. Thus, when a baby is born, at once duties fall on the shoulders of the father and mother. When a child begins to have a little sense, at once duties devolve on it towards its father and mother, and brothers and sisters. Everyone who has a friend, has duties which he owes to his friend : the moment a neighbour comes next door, he brings with him duties which he owes to you, and you to him.

Every man who employs another man, every woman who employs another woman, owes duties to the person employed.

If you take many men into your service, and have young women in your house to act as cook, and house-maid, and nurse, and kitchen-maid, and dairy-maid, and so on, then you have certain responsibilities. The welfare, the conduct of those persons in your service, are to a certain extent controlled by you, and to the same extent as their welfare and conduct are under your con-

trol, to that extent stretches your responsibility. You are not, of course, equally responsible for the household servant, and for the woman whom you occasionally employ to weed the turnips. That stands to reason. You do not owe the same duties to the boy you employ once in a way to drive away the crows from the new sown field, and to the man who has been for twenty years daily working for you. That stands to reason.

These are some of the duties which employers owe to those who are in their service :—

1. To act with *justice* towards their servants. That is to say, to give them a fair wage, a fair amount of work, and not to accuse them wrongfully or hastily.

Now what regulates the wage? That is difficult to answer, because many causes tend to raise or depress it, and *justly* to raise or depress it.

Suppose a farm brings in one year such and such a sum, clear profit, say £500, and next year through bad harvests, there is a dead loss on it of £250, it is clear that a farmer must strike a balance, and allow for losses, and pay wage justly according as the balance stands.

So again, people with small incomes may no'

be able to afford to keep many servants at high wages; they are bound to pay those servants whom they do employ such a wage as is a fair equivalent for their work.

No employer has any right to take an unfair advantage of the need of the person employed, so as to strike a hard bargain. Hereabouts many poor widows and girls work at tailoring. From what I hear, the sums paid are unfair. They do not justly represent the amount of work done. Where the blame lies, it is hard to point out. The employers who give them the coats to make, at from 7d. to 1s. 4d. a coat, they to find their own cotton, &c., sell no doubt those coats in the town at a very low price. They clear a certain profit, but that is only reasonable. If they paid more for the making of the coats, they would clear the same profit, but the buyers would pay dearer for them. What I think should be done would be for these employers to fix a fair price for making the garments, a fair rate of profit for themselves, and then sell them at what they can afford. Whether their profit is exorbitant or not, I cannot tell without looking at their books.

Then again, masters and mistresses are bound

not to be hasty in accusing their servants rightly or wrongly, to be patient with them, and allow something for their infirmities.

Of course it would not be *just* for a master or mistress to allow the work of the farm or the house to be done in a slovenly and imperfect manner, for that is allowing the servant to act unjustly towards his or her employer, and to contract a bad habit.

2. Employers are bound to act with *consideration* towards their servants.

That is, to take pains that they should not be over worked, that they should be given relaxation and amusements. They should not be harsh and tyrannical towards them; if they are ill, they should do what they could to relieve them of their work; they should provide that they may have intellectual improvement, and see that they do not contract wasteful habits with regard to their wage, if they have an opportunity of so advising them.

Servant girls once on a time used to dress quietly and lay by their money in savings banks, so that it mounted up, and when they married or grew old, they had a nice round sum to fall back on. And let me tell you, a young man

would much rather that his wife brought him a sum enough to furnish the house with her savings, than a set of bandboxes, with silk bonnets, and grand flounced gowns, with just a ha'penny in her pocket.

A mistress may do much to advise a young girl to adopt a prudent course with her wage, and not to put it all on her head and back, and if she considers the welfare of the girl in her charge, she will do so.

Again, masters and mistresses should learn to bear with their servants' frailties, and not be too hasty to give them notice. Considerations for their weakness will make the employer overlook little faults, and a gentle reprimand will often be found to answer, in place of a hasty notice to be off.

I remember my dear old father, now no more, and his coachman, having their little recurring troubles with one another. The faithful servant who had been with us since he was a child, every now and then took a drop too much, and his driving was sometimes dangerous to carriage and its occupants.

Then my father getting very much troubled, would take a day to think the matter over, and be very silent, for his thought was on the affair,

and he would be making up his mind to part with his coachman. At last he screwed up courage to give him notice, and sent for him to his library. Richard knew well enough why he was sent for, and came looking miserable.

My father would gravely speak of the offence, and how it had imperilled lives, and then say that he was very sorry, but part they must.

Richard's eye would fill, and he would stammer forth his sorrow, and then fairly break down, and thereupon all my father's resolution and courage would melt away, his eyes filled also; and it ended, "Well,—I suppose we neither "of us can bear to part from the other, so you "really, Richard, must try to overcome your "bad habit."

3. Employers are bound to give their servants time to perform their *religious obligations.*

That is, it is their duty to arrange for their servants going to Church, on Sundays and other Festivals, and to give them opportunities, if they are communicants, to receive the Blessed Sacrament; if they are unconfirmed, it is their duty to give them opportunities for attending classes in which they may be prepared for Confirmation.

They should watch for their spiritual welfare,

do all in their power to keep them from bad associates, and instil into their hearts the spirit of religion.

They must be careful to set them a good example of Church-going, of orderliness, alacrity, cheerfulness, quietness, and the like. The example of master or mistress goes a long way towards forming the character of their younger servants.

4. And lastly, Employers should remember that they owe a debt of *gratitude* to their servants. Let them forget the imperfections, to consider the many good qualities their servants possess; they are, I dare say, thoroughly trustworthy, and serve you honestly and uprightly. They are up early and work late for you, and their service is often a kindly, willing one. The wage will not pay for that, for the cheerful smile, the nimbleness in executing a commission, the readiness to relieve a mistress from solicitude when she is ill, the diligence when the master is far away. The bond uniting master and servant should not be a mere mercenary one; the servants become in a manner part of your family, and some of the affection you lavish on your children is due to them also Regard them only as hirelings, and they will look on you only as paymaster.

SERMON XIII.

THE DUTIES OF SERVANTS.

(4TH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.)

ROMANS XIII, 7.

"Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

I SPOKE to you last Sunday of the duties which masters and mistresses owe to those who serve them.

To-day I am going to speak of the duties which servants owe to their masters and mistresses. And when I say that there are duties they owe to others, you will understand that these are obligations laid on them by God, and for which He will call them to account.

There are several passages in Scripture, in which the duties of servants are laid down. I will read them to you:

S. Paul, in the sixth chapter to the Ephesians

writes, "Servants, be obedient to them that are "your masters according to the flesh, with fear "and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as "unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-"pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing "the will of God from the heart; with good will "doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; "knowing that whatsoever good thing any man "doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord."

And again, in his Epistle to S. Titus, in the second chapter, S. Paul writes, "Exhort servants "to be obedient unto their own masters, and to "please them well in all things; not answering "again; not purloining, but showing all good "fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of "God our Saviour in all things."

And again, in his first Epistle to S. Timothy, and the sixth chapter, "Let as many servants as "are under the yoke count their own masters "worthy of all honour, that the name of God and "His doctrines be not blasphemed. And they "that have believing masters, let them not "despise them, because they are brethren; but "rather do them service, because they are faithful "and beloved, partakers of the benefit."

It is a very beautiful and touching thought for

masters, that in their servants they can reverence the person of Christ; for wherever a member of Christ is, there is Christ.

So S. Paul, in one of the passages I have quoted, bids the servants do glad service to their masters, as to the Lord. Their work which they have to do in the farm or in the house, is done as to the Lord; and if done well and conscientiously, it will be rewarded by God. This he bids servants remember when they are working for their masters, that "Whatsoever good thing any "man worketh, the same shall he receive of the "Lord."

What a beautiful link there would be between masters and servants if each saw Christ in the other; what solicitude there would be in one for the other? What conscientious discharge of duties on both sides?

There is something peculiarly honourable and blessed in the work of a servant; for is not he or she occupying the position adopted by Jesus Christ? "He made Himself of no reputation, "and took upon Him the form of a servant." What is the work of a servant? Is it not labouring for others? Ploughing the field of another; attending to another man's horses; washing the

floor ; scouring the doorsteps of another person's house ; attending to the wants of another.

Well! and what was the work of the Blessed Jesus from the moment he came into the world? Was it not that of doing something for others? He did nothing for Himself. He was always ministering to the necessities, the misfortunes of others.

It was not for Himself that He toiled in the workshop of Nazareth. Not for Himself that He went about teaching and working miracles. Not for Himself that He gave Himself up to death. It was not for Himself that He rose from the grave. It was to break the power of the grave for us. It was not for Himself even that He ascended up into Heaven. "I go to prepare a "place for *you*."

And what is the great lesson of Christianity? Why to work for others ; to forget self in care for others, fellow members of Christ's Body. I think it must be because there is something peculiarly Christ-like and therefore blessed in the work of a servant, that we find in the lists of the Saints such numbers of servant men and servant girls Ploughmen, shepherds, swineherds; cooks and housemaids and nurse girls crowd the

glorious pages of the history of the Blessed Ones whom the Church loves to honour.

Madrid, the capital of Spain, loves and honours the memory of an old, simple, hard working ploughman. I know a grand old church in Sussex, which honours its founder and patron, a shepherd lad, who, when his poor old mother became paralyzed, and he could not leave her for his work, and could not live without work, made a sort of two wheeled conveyance, on which to lay her, and then he went about pushing the old woman before him, peddling little goods from town to town. I know a little chapel built by the side of a sluggish canal in Belgium, built to the memory, never forgotten, of a holy barmaid in a little tavern. There is a blue flower you will find in the hedges, which we in England call Speedwell, which French and Italians call Veronica, after a saintly maid-of-all-work. Two years ago in Tyrol, I saw in almost every cottage a picture of a holy woman, a peasant girl, with sickle in hand; whose virtues the Tyrolese have not forgotten, though she lived four hundred years ago.

But now let us come to the duties of servants. They are set down so plainly by S. Paul, that it would seem as if nothing more need be said of

them. However, I will sum them up, and slightly expand them.

The duties of servants towards their masters are,—

1. *Not to wrong their master in his goods*, by appropriating them, or giving them to others, or carelessly injuring or wasting them.

The master and mistress entrust their goods to the servant, relying on his or her honesty. The master cannot always be present, and it is not well that he should. Servants should not want the employer's eye always on them, and they would not, if they remembered that the eye of God is always watching.

Now servants, as they are not using their own things, have only a right to use the things entrusted to them for that purpose and to that extent, to which they are entrusted. For instance, a man is just as guilty, if he neglects to attend to a sheep so that it dies, as he would be if he had found so many pounds of his master, and had flung them into the sea. A servant commits just as truly a robbery if she wastes, say a piece of meat worth two and sixpence, as if she took half-a-crown out of her mistress's purse.

So also neglect by workmen of thatching a rick,

so that it gets spoiled by rain, is as truly a robbery as if they took from their master's pocket the value of the damaged corn. Of course I am not speaking of accidents ; I am speaking of loss through idleness or neglect.

So also, giving away, or selling of broken meat and bread, from a house, without the mistress's knowledge, is fraud. What is disposed of is not the cook's to give away, or sell, unless with the consent of the mistress, whose it is.

2. Now let us come to another duty. Servants are bound to *prevent others from defrauding their employers.* Servants, I know well, do not like, and quite rightly so, to tell of the faults of a fellow servant. But no servant ought to allow another to waste wantonly, or make away with what belongs to his or her employer. He can refuse to permit it, and threaten, in case it is persisted in, to report it. To be aware of a theft, and not to reveal it, is, according to law, punishable.

3. Another duty is *to be active, industrious, and cheerful.*

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with "all thy might," says the Preacher. Work done should be thorough, service rendered "with

"good will, as to the Lord," "not with eye-"service, as men pleasers, but as the servants "of Christ." The Apostle means that servants should do their work thoroughly, as though their master was watching them all the time, for indeed, the service is rendered to Christ, and He is watching. Let the work be conscientiously done.

An eminent preacher told the story that a servant maid who had been careless and without thought of God, had her heart changed. And when he, doubting profession, asked for some evidence, by her works, that she feared God, she answered, "Sir! now I always sweep under the "mats. Before, I used to brush all the dirt "under them, where it would not be seen."

4. Another duty is *obedience without gainsaying.*

S. Paul says, "Not answering again."

I admit that masters and mistresses are most aggravating at times, finding fault unreasonably, cross-tempered, given to scold, scold, scold, from morning till night; and it is very hard to control the tongue, and not give them in turn a bit of one's mind.

But servants who know how to control their tongues and tempers before an aggravating em-

ployer, have acquired not only one of those things which, in the higher classes, is taught with great labour to young people, but also have acquired one of those virtues which brings them very near to Christ their model. In the higher walks of life it is regarded as a necessary quality of a true English gentleman and lady, never to be so put out as to say or do a rude thing. However vexing and discourteous another person may be, never to forget their own dignity, but to preserve self control, and speak with politeness to the most provoking and insolent person.

They do it, and are taught with much hard labour to practise this restraint of their tongues and tempers, because, if they lose their self-control, it is said at once, So and so is not a true gentleman or perfect lady.

But what a far higher motive it is for using this restraint of self, if we are trying to be like Christ. He, "when He was reviled, reviled not "again ; when He suffered, He threatened not." "Servants," says S. Peter, "be subject to your "masters with all fear ; not only to the good and "gentle, but also to the froward. For this is "thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards "God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what

"glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your "faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when "ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, "this is acceptable with God. For even here-"unto were ye called; because Christ also "suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye "should follow His steps."

See how high the Apostle estimates this virtue; it is thankworthy, estimable, acceptable with God, it is Christ-like.

Verily, I have often wondered at the patience and forbearance of servants under great provocation, and have felt that, if they acted thus "for "conscience sake," they were growing very like to their Saviour.

5 There is one more duty to masters, *respect.* "Render," says S. Paul, "to all their dues;—"custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; "honour to whom honour."

We must respect everyone, for in everyone there is something good, a spark of Christ. That is the true motive for politeness. We honour in one another whatever is Christ-like. We are dreadfully behind-hand other nations in courtesy, I fear; perhaps because we do not bear in mind sufficiently that whoever has, by Baptism,

put on Christ, is to be honoured as a member of Christ, and that in him there is something,—it may be little,—but still there is something of Christ.

I have seen in Germany, two little boys driving their pigs into the wood to feed on acorns, meet and talk; the two herds must not be together, they discussed the matter, and parted with a bow, lifting their caps to one another. It raised a smile, but it was wholesome. You may depend upon it, he who respects others is the man who respects himself.

Now masters and mistresses are invested with some of Christ's authority. "The powers that "be," says S. Paul, "are ordained of God." All authority issues from Christ; the highest and the lowest. And the servant who is respectful recognises in his master that authority with which he has been invested by God.

And now to conclude. My dear brethren, masters and servants, I pray you bear in heart the maxims of conduct I have laid so plainly before you. Remember in your daily life your several duties; and I venture to trust that there will be much more union, and mutual affection and kindliness, and peace and goodwill.

SERMON XIV.

LONG-SUFFERING.

(FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.)

COL. iii. 12, 13.

"Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel, against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

WHAT a perfect, beautiful, loveable character, S. Paul here describes! the pattern Christian, the perfect disciple of Christ.

"Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye, "if any man have a quarrel against any." Is that the way in which we act? Let us see.

As a general rule, men are much more forbearing than women, for this reason, that they knock about in the world, and get hard rubs and give them, and they know that these things must

occur. If they are touchy, they find that they cannot get on in their business; their welfare depends on their making friends, and they have to swallow affronts because they cannot afford to resent them, or else because they have learned from experience that unintentionally they have said and done things which have annoyed other people, and so they are well aware that they must make allowance for others saying and doing provoking things, without intention of giving umbrage. Some people are always treading on other people's corns with the best intentions in the world; men get to know that other men are clumsy and intend no mischief.

But there are men who to the end of their days maintain a quarrelsome, irritable temper. When I was a boy I knew two farmers who farmed their own little estates, and their land adjoined. Both were testy men, and as ill-luck would have it, there was a question about a path —whether there was a right of way over it,—in farmer T.'s land. Farmer B. maintained it was the shortest cut for him to go along it once a week to Church. It saved him just five minutes, if he crossed the field of farmer T., and he maintained it was an old established Church-path.

Farmer T. denied it, and raised a hedge across the path. Farmer B. pulled the hedge down. Then there came an action for trespass and injury done. For, I cannot tell you now how many years, lawsuits went on between the two farmers, all about this right of way. The end of it was, that both farmer T. and farmer B. had to sell their lands to pay lawyer's expenses, and their place knows them no more.

Now, although some men are quarrelsome, yet on the whole they are more forbearing with one another than are women; because, as I said, they learn forbearance by knocking about in the world.

Women, living much at home, make little worlds for themselves in their parish. Their minds not being occupied with matters of great importance, take up with trifles, the tittle-tattle of the parish, this leads very often to their making great grievances out of casual acts or words of their neighbours.

Mrs. A. goes into the house of Mrs. B., and at once Mrs. B. opens out her tale of woes. Mrs. C. has said this spiteful thing of her, which is quite untrue and uncalled for, and if she Mrs. B. were to say all she knew, she is sure she could

tell sad tales of what Mrs. C. had done, that nobody else knows of, and Mrs. C. had better take care, if she goes on with her lying, wicked words, she Mrs. B. will let out things about Mrs. C. that will make her very uncomfortable, and mightily ashamed of herself.

Or else, Mrs. D. has taken an advantage of her in such and such a way, and she Mrs. B., will take care to let every one know, who has dealings with Mrs. D., how sharp and dishonest a customer she is. And so and so, and so and so. You know how these sort of matters go on, and what mighty quarrels spring out of trifles.

A very good fellow, a clergyman I knew once, was sorely troubled at the quarrels in his parish, and he set to work to unravel them. Say Mrs. X. had a grievance, and was not on speaking terms with Mrs. Z. Well! he set to work to find out the origin of the quarrel. In nine cases out of ten, after a deal of tracking a story from one to another, it was found out that there was no foundation whatever for the feud. So he would clear the whole matter up. Mrs. Z. had never said or done what was reported of her, therefore Mrs. X. had better shake hands, and be good friends once more.

But the most extraordinary fact now transpired, Mrs. X. and Mrs. Z., and certainly all the neighbours, did not thank my dear good friend for his trouble. They were cross because there was no foundation for their quarrel. If there was no foundation, there might have been. They hugged their imaginary grievances, delighted in them, and went on backbiting and sneering at one another, and refusing to speak to one another, just the same as before; and all abused the parson for meddling in what did not concern him. I have seen in the south of France a row of beggars sitting on the side of a bridge, day after day, winter and summer, showing sore legs and sore arms; these sores never get well, they were kept continually raw with caustic, in order to excite compassion, and obtain alms. And the most bitter jealousy reigned between these beggars as to the size and irritability of their respective sores. The man with only an inflamed knee burned with envy of the man whose whole leg was raw Not for all the world would they let their wounds heal, as that would cut off from them a means of livelihood.

Now I fear a great many people love their grievances against neighbours, much as those

beggars loved their sores. They keep them constantly open and irritable by inventing and applying fresh aggravations. They are proud of them, they like to expose their wrongs, as they call them, to all their neighbours. To have a neighbour drop in, and really to have no grievance to talk over!—It would be intolerable, humiliating!

Look at the words of S. Paul. "Put ye on, "as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels "of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, "meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one "another, and forgiving one another, if any "man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ "forgave you, so also do ye." Do not these words put you to shame? Do not they make you feel, Verily the Apostle is describing a very different temper and condition of society from that which is most prevalent amongst us nominal Christians.

What is that which we are taught to pray every day? "Forgive us our trespasses, as we "forgive others their trespasses." For, as our Lord says, if we forgive not others their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses. You see, if we hope to be

forgiven for all the wrong we have done, we must forgive others the wrong done to us. God will not forgive us without it. Our hope of salvation depends on the way in which we behave towards those who have injured us.

There was once upon a time a bishop of Alexandria in Egypt, named John the Almsgiver. A nobleman came to see him one day, and the conversation turned on a grievance. So and so had wronged him cruelly; and never to his dying day could he forgive him. He spoke with warmth and anger; his face darkened with passion and his eye sparkled. Just at that moment the bell tinkled for prayers in the bishop's private chapel, and he rose and bade the noble follow him. S. John the Almsgiver knelt at the altar, and the nobleman knelt immediately behind him. Presently the bishop began in a loud voice the Lord's Prayer, and the nobleman repeated each part with him. "Thy will be done on earth, "as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily "bread." The bishop stopped abruptly. The nobleman, not thinking, went on alone; "And "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them "that trespass against us." Then, finding he was alone, stopped short also. The bishop did

not go on, but remained silently kneeling. Then suddenly the sense of the words of the petition he had made, rushed on the nobleman's mind. The grace of God worked. He silently rose from his knees, went forth, and finding the man who had offended him, frankly forgave him.

One day the governor of Alexandria was in high wrath with the bishop, who had remonstrated with him at levying a tax, which was peculiarly oppressive to the poor. Backbiters had managed to widen the breach, and the governor after an interview with the bishop, in which he had given vent to his angry, excited feeling, left for his palace.

Towards evening the good old bishop got very troubled at the quarrel. He could not bear that any should be at enmity with him; so he wrote on a slip of parchment the words, *The sun is setting*, and sent it to the governor, who at once remembered the words of S. Paul, "Let not the "sun go down upon your wrath," and rising from the table where he had been sitting, he hastened to the old prelate, to be reconciled to him before the day was done.

I do not mean that we are not to be vexed and angry when wronged, but I mean that we have

no right to harbour malice; we have no right to make mountains out of molehills in matters of wrong. We are bound to take every means to ascertain that the wrong was *really done*, and is not purely imaginary.

Again, we are bound to ascertain whether the wrong was done *accidentally* or not.

Very often we quarrel with our neighbours, not so much over the wrong done us, which is trifling, but over the motive, which we suppose actuated it. Now we have no right to assume that the motive was malicious, unless it is abundantly clear that such is the case. Very frequently a wrong is done by some one, who is very sorry for it, it was done by accident, and he would gladly repair it. But, "Hah!" say we, "so and so did this on purpose. He has "long been looking out for an opportunity of "doing us a spiteful turn, and now he has taken "the occasion of doing this." And thence a pretty quarrel arises. Anger under certain cases is legitimate Some day I shall speak to you of when, and in what measure it is just. But it is against unreasonable quarrels, offences which rise out of nothing, and are harboured with pleasure, that I am now speaking.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, "and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away "from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one "to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one "another, even as God for Christ's sake hath "forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 31-32.)

SERMON XV.

THE WORK OF CHRIST.

(6TH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.)

1 S. JOHN III, 8.

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

WE are scarcely conscious, dear brethren, of the wonderful power the Gospel has exerted in Christian lands.

Living in the midst of civilization, seeing lives held precious around us, integrity, truth, modesty universally respected, we do not think sufficiently of the marvellous transformation which has been wrought in Europe by the manifestation of the Son of God. We do not consider sufficiently how truly He has delivered us from the terrible bondage of Satan, how many of the works of the devil He has destroyed.

Let me read you a passage from a book of travels lately published, and you will see the sort

of thing that goes on still in other realms where the light of the Son of God has not yet shone, and where Satan still reigns on his cruel throne.

It is an account of an event which happened in the year 1870, in Central Africa, on the death of a petty king.

"The son ascends the throne, and the funeral "of his father is his first duty. An immense "pit or trench is dug, capable of containing "several hundred people. This pit is neatly "lined with new bark-cloths. Several wives of "the late King are seated together at the bottom, "to bear upon their knees the body of their "departed lord. The night previous to the "funeral, the king's body-guard surround many "dwellings and villages, and seize the people "indiscriminately as they issue from their doors "in the early morning. These captives are "brought to the pit's mouth. Their legs and "arms are now broken with clubs, and they are "pushed into the pit on the top of the king's "body and his wives. An immense din of drums, "horns, flageolets, whistles, mingled with the "yells of a frantic crowd, drown the shrieks of "the sufferers, upon whom the earth is shovelled "and stamped down by thousands of cruel

"fanatics, who dance and jump upon the loose "mould, so as to force it into a compact mass; "through which the victims of this horrible "sacrifice cannot grope their way, the precaution "having been taken to break the bones of their "arms and legs. At length the mangled mass "is buried and trodden down beneath a mound of "earth, and all is still. The funeral is over."*

In 1346, more than four hundred years ago, an Arab traveller described the same ceremony as occurring in the same countryin his days. During four hundred years as we know, then, have these horrors been perpetrated. And during how many hundreds and thousands of years has this gone on, perhaps? How many thousands and tens of thousands of writhing men and women with broken legs and arms have lain struggling under the earth, as it has been heaped on them, burying them alive?

I wonder what you were doing that day in England? Quietly, happily, reaping the corn. The golden ears fell under your sickles, and you whistled with merry hearts. And presently your little girl came along the road with a can and a bundle; the dinner for father. So you went

* "Ismailia," by Sir S. W. Baker, Vol. II., p. 20, 1—2.

under the shadow of a tree in the hedge, and unknotted the blue kerchief in which the pasty was tied up, and took out your knife. To the south the blue sea was twinkling with a thousand smiles, and the white sails of the fishers' boats rested like the wings of sea gulls on its expanse. The bees were humming round you. And all that while, the same sun was looking down on the horrors of King Kamrasi's funeral. Little you knew it at the time. You could not have eaten your dinner, had you seen before you that moving heap of earth and human beings being kneaded together.

You know, doubtless, that recently the Fijee Islands have been annexed to the British Empire. A missionary there not fifty years ago, thus writes of the natives. "To be an acknowledged "murderer is the object of a Fijian's restless "ambition. To this they are trained from infancy. "The mothers cultivate the passion of cruelty "in their children, as we labour to draw out in "ours the feeling of pity. One of the first lessons "taught the infant is to strike its mother."

Now the red cross of S. George waves over those islands. Long have missionaries laboured there. The Light of Christ has shone into that

darkness, and the horrors which stained the soil of Fijee red with human blood, are no more. There the Son of God has begun to destroy the works of the devil.

Last summer I went to Trèves, in Germany, on the river Moselle. It was a grand old town in days of the Romans, and there Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, had a palace. He was not a Christian when he was there. The Roman Empire was the most civilized then in the world, its civilization fell little short of ours now; but one element was wanting which distinguished Roman civilization from Christian civilization. The Son of God had not been fully manifested then to the old Romans, and the works of the devil were not destroyed.

At Trèves there is a great amphitheatre, a large oval flat piece of ground scooped out between two hills; round this were built, or cut in the rock, ranges above ranges of seats; so that 20,000 persons could be accommodated, sitting round the open oval space, with their eyes on it, seeing all that went on therein. This open space measures 235ft. by 155; and has deep drains cut in the rock all round it. I will tell you their purpose presently.

In the old heathen Roman days, one of the greatest of pleasures to the people was to see what they called "games" in the amphitheatre. They crowded thither on holidays, highborn ladies and gentlemen, and tradespeople and workmen with their wives and children to see the sport.

When the place was full, then some armed men were placed in the open space, and they were set on to hack and kill one another. Sometimes naked unarmed men were exposed there to wild beasts.

Constantiue, the Roman Emperor, who afterwards became a Christian, fought twice against the brave free Germans, and conquered them; and he brought the prisoners—thousands of them—and without giving them arms, stood them in this open space, and turned wild beasts, lions, and tigers, and bears in upon them So great were the crowds of men thus exposed to be torn and eaten by the beasts, that the wild animals got tired, and desisted, glutted, from their horrible work Then the people shouted that swords should be put into the hands of those who survived, and that they should be made to fight and kill one another. But the brave Germans refused

to fight their own countrymen and relatives, to amuse these polished ladies and gentlemen, and workmen's families; rather than that, they placed the hilts of the swords on the ground, and fell on them themselves. Those deep cut drains now served the end for which they were made, they ran with streams of blood, and poured the red current into the waters of a mountain brook that flows hard by.

I picked some little crimson wild roses growing on the spot where those brave men died; and I thought how wonderfully Christ has changed the hearts of men since His coming, how truly His manifestation has been one of destruction of the works of the devil.

But if Christ has done much by His manifestation to destroy the works of the devil, all those works are not yet destroyed. There is a paper which I am sorry to see in some of your cottages, with a sheet full of pictures of murders and other crimes. It gives an account of the most conspicuously wicked things done in England during the week. In other words it tells you what are the devil's doings still in England, what are the works which have not yet been destroyed. I wonder whether some three hundred years hence a few

copies of that paper shall be preserved. Perhaps then the manifestation of the Son of God may have rolled further back the tide of vice and darkness. Then perhaps some will point to these old newspapers, just as I have pointed to the horrors of the amphitheatre at Trèves, and will say, "See "what dreadful things were done in 1875, men "kicked their wives to death, some blew their "own brains out, mothers drowned their children, "wives poisoned their husbands. How changed "are we now in the year 2175; such works of "the devil are of the past; such brutality and "cruelty are no more." It is quite possible that this may be the case. In Constantine's time if you had told a Roman that in a few centuries his grand games and splendid sports would be regarded with loathing, he would have thought it impossible, ridiculous. Yet the change has been effected. So it is quite possible that wife kicking and child murder and other of the crimes which disfigure modern civilization, may be no more.

But that depends. Civilization itself will never banish evil, will never destroy the works of the devil. The Son of God alone can do that. Civilization must be Christian, or it will never

dispel crime. It is the manifestation of the Son of God which has softened the heart of mankind. The sight of Jesus on the cross has made men's breasts tender, has filled them with compassion for other men, members of Jesus Christ. As His truth spreads, as His teaching sinks into the consciences of men, so do gentleness, goodness, and temperance spring up.

We may become more and more refined and luxurious, and skilful in applying to our use the forces of nature, but anger, hatred, malice, lust, covetousness, will remain as fierce as ever in the breasts of men, unless our civilization be qualified and accompanied by the manifestation of the Son of God. That alone can sanctify it; that alone can soften and purify it; can save it from being intensely selfish. And selfishness is the root of most evil acts.

Now it is quite true that we have become more tender-hearted than were our forefathers, that those cruel things which amused men of old horrify us; but has the manifestation of the Son of God made men and women more modest and pure than in heathen times? I hope so. There is, no doubt, less open flagrant licence than in olden days, but I think there is much improve-

ment to be made in this respect, there is much amendment to be wished for in this direction. There is many a sad story and scandal circulating in every parish, which shows how much has still to be done by the Son of God among us for the sanctifying and cleansing of our lives. There is much talk going on in the fields, in the road, in the tavern, I am sorry to add, in your own homes, which should be banished, and would be banished were the Son of God manifested in your hearts.

Yes, my brethren, the Son of God must be manifested in us. There are in us the roots of evil, ready to yield a crop of ill weeds. But the more that the brightness of the Gospel shines into our hearts, the more will darkness fly away, the more of good seed we sow, the less of weed will spring up. Our hearts are like stagnant pools ; let in the little pure stream of Christian grace, and it gradually purifies the pond, instead of turbid water full of ill looking reptiles, you have pure, transparent water.

The manifestation of the Son of God began in you at your baptism. Do not obscure that sunbeam that then broke into the dark cavern of your soul; do not shut off that limpid current of living water from flowing in and cleansing that turbid

pool! Daily should we have Christ becoming more manifest in us; daily should the work of destruction of the works of the devil proceed in us, till the time come when we shall wake up after His likeness, and be satisfied therewith.

SERMON XVI.

THE BUSINESS OF LIFE.

(SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.)

S. MATTHEW, XX. 6.

"Why stand ye here all the day idle."

THE parable in to-day's Gospel represents the world as a market place, the Church as a vineyard, and the Lord Jesus Christ as an householder. This householder goes out early in the morning to hire labourers to work in his vineyard; that is, Christ calls little children into His Church and sets them work which will occupy them to the day of their death The householder goes out about the third hour, that is at nine o'clock, and finding some in the market place doing nothing, he hires them also to work in his vineyard; this means that Christ calls some when boys and girls, not yet men and women, and no

longer children, and sets them also their tasks. The householder goes out again at the sixth hour, that is, at noon. This means that Christ calls to work in his Church some when advanced to middle age. The man that owns the vineyard goes out again at the ninth hour, at three o'clock in the afternoon, and collects more labourers. This signifies that God calls in fresh labourers in the afternoon of their life, at forty or fifty; and lastly, the vineyard proprietor went forth in the evening, at the eleventh hour, an hour before sunset, "and found others standing idle, and "saith unto them, why stand ye here all the day "idle? They say unto him, because no man hath "hired us. He saith unto them, go ye also into "the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that "shall ye receive. So when even was come, the "Lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, "call the labourers and give them their hire, "beginning from the last unto the first. And "when they came that were hired about the "eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. "But when the first came, they supposed that "they should have received more; and they like-"wise received every man a penny."

Those called at the eleventh hour mean old

folks who are not far off from death, who have very little time in which to work.

Now the *hiring* means Baptism, whereby we make a covenant with God to work for Him in keeping His commandments and doing our duty in that state of life to which He has called us; and the *payment* is eternal life, which He promises when He hires us, to all such as shall do their covenanted work in His vineyard.

The hiring does not mean conversion. Some perverse folk take this parable, and twist out of it a meaning it was never intended to have. They say, the call of the householder to the men, means conversion. Some are converted as children, some as boys, some as men, and some as old men. But if you will give the parable a moment's thought, you will see that this cannot be the meaning.

What is Conversion? It is the waking of a man to his duties, it is not the laying of duties on him. Suppose that one of the labourers called into the vineyard at an early hour had laid aside his hoe, and sitting down under a tree had fallen fast asleep. Some one lights on him lying dreaming in the shade at three o'clock in the afternoon, and shakes him, and says, "wake up,

"my friend, what have you been about? There's "none of your work done." Then the labourer jumps up, looks at his watch, finds he has wasted six hours, and alive to his duty, sets to work with might and main, and never lets the spade or hoe out of his hand, or stops to exchange a word with anyone, so busy is he to redeem the time, and make up for the lost hours. That, if you please, is Conversion.

There is many a man who having hired himself to God at his Baptism, neglects his work, plays, idles, sleeps, and none of the duties laid upon him by God are done. At last, the preacher, or some friend, startles him out of this careless mood, and says to him, What folly is this? You promised to keep God's laws, to resist the devil, the world and the flesh, and you have not begun to do so yet. The night cometh when no man can work! Then he is startled, and labours to become a good Christian during the rest of the time that is left him.

Conversion you see is not a man taking upon him new duties, but it is becoming alive to the fact that he has already taken them on him. Now in the parable, the calling of the labourers is the making a covenant with them. Do a cer-

tain work, says the Master, and I will pay you a certain wage.

Baptism exactly answers to this. At our Baptism we agree to do a certain work for God, —to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to fight against the devil and all his works, eschew the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and overcome all the sinful lusts of the flesh. That is our work in the vineyard of the Church, and the wage promised is Life Eternal.

"Except a man be born of water and the Holy "Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of "Heaven," says our Lord. "The Kingdom of "Heaven," He says again, "is like unto a man "that is an householder, which went out early in "the morning to hire labourers into his vine-"yard," and then follows the rest of the parable. The vineyard is the Church, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, the only entrance unto it is by water and the Holy Ghost, and these are the two elements which constitute Baptism.

Now pray observe that the labourers are sent into the vineyard *to work.* They are not sent into it to dawdle their time away, chatting with one another, playing games,—but to work. So

we, when we were baptized, were set in the Church with definite work before us, and God expects us to work hard at it.

How are you getting on with your task? Look at what you have done for God since you were a child; what virtues have you acquired? Have you mastered all the sinful lusts of the flesh? Have you renounced all the works of the devil? Have you tried hard to keep the ten commandments, not in the letter only as they were set to the Jews, but in the Spirit also, as they are set to Christians? What have you done to advance God's kingdom?

It behoves us, my friends, to review our work, to see that we really have done something for God. I ask you most seriously, what have you done? Have you sown to the flesh, or have you laid up treasure in Heaven? What have you done all the years that are past? Did you set God always before you? Did you act as though His eye were always on you? Did you always remember that you will have to give a strict account of your acts? You are now so many years old; what have you done in those years? What have you done for God? What have you done of the work you promised to do? What

have you done in keeping the commandments? What have you done towards acquiring an intelligent belief in the articles of the faith? What have you done towards victory over self? Over the Devil? Over the world?

Can you put your finger on any good thing, things for God you have done, on any victory over passion, on any act of forgiveness towards an enemy, on any mercy shown to one who was indebted to you, on any tenderness towards one suffering, on any effort made to set a good example, on any check against sin effected by your speaking out in condemnation of it?

What have you done during all these precious years that are past?

Jacob was on his way to Laban. He spent a night on the road. As he slept he saw in a vision a ladder let down from heaven to earth. Above it was the majesty of God, and on the ladder were angels ascending and descending. And when he opened his eyes, ladder and angels, and the glory above had all vanished; then he said, "How dreadful is this place! This is none "other but the house of God, and this is the "gate of Heaven." What he saw was a picture of human life with its work and its opportunities.

A golden ladder reaches from heaven to earth, crowded with angels going up and coming down. Up the ladder to God go all the good deeds, good thoughts, good words we have given birth to; they are borne up to be treasure in Heaven.

When the angel was sent to Cornelius, he said, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up "for a memorial before God." All his acts of charity, all his glowing devotions had gone up the ladder, and God had seen them, and He sent down the ladder the angel who was to bring S. Peter to him to baptize him.

Every time you have done a kind act, every time you have resisted temptation, every time you have checked anger as it rose, or restrained your tongue from speaking evil, every time you have prayed with your heart, every time you have loved to serve God better, every tearful confession of sin, every fervent communnion at the Altar, has gone up the ladder. And what is it that is ever coming down? Why Divine Grace; Grace to help your infirmities, to strengthen the weak, to heal the stricken, to pierce the heart, to exalt the fallen, all, all comes down the ladder When a child is baptized, down the ladder comes divine grace, to enable the child to be a

good Christian, and to unite it to Christ, as well as an angel to be its guardian through life.

When the Bishop lays his hand in Confirmation on the head of the candidate, down the ladder comes a gush of strength which pours into the heart of the recipient of the laying on of hands. Every time you kneel at the altar, Jesus Christ Himself comes down the ladder to feed you with his precious broken body, and outpoured blood. Every time you pray, an answer comes down from God; the ladder is thronged with gifts sent down to those who send up prayers for them.

When Jacob opened his eyes, and saw that the ladder had vanished, he said, "How dreadful "is this place." Why do you think he said so? Because he saw that the ladder was there only for a time It was let down for a while, and then drawn up again into Heaven.

In olden times all cities were surrounded with walls and deep ditches, and during the day, bridges crossed the moats from the gates, so that people could go in and out readily. But at nightfall, for fear of enemies, these bridges were pulled up by chains, and then there was no entering the city till morning. Suppose a tra-

veller came just too late, and saw the bridge pulled up, he would say, "How terrible is this "place! Here I must remain through the cold "dark night, exposed to wind and rain, and in "peril of robbers, because I have come too late. "The bridge is raised and I cannot enter in."

Well! dreadful is this place, this world, this life of ours. For a while, the brief span of our days, the ladder is let down, and we can send up our good deeds and earnest prayers, our tears and sighs, and we can receive the grace poured down: but, the moment our last hour has come, the day of our probation is over, the ladder is drawn up. Then we may stand without and cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" but He will answer "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not, "depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."

How dreadful is this place! How dreadful is it, to think that our day of grace will not last for ever; that if we do not send up our good deeds and prayers, and contrition, and praises for mercy now that the ladder is let down, if we do not go to the Sacraments now, and draw from them the grace that is always coming down the ladder from Heaven, there will come a time when the ladder will be drawn up. Then it will be in

vain to repent, in vain to wail with sorrow over the past, in vain to strive to do good works meet for repentance; then it will be in vain to seek for grace, for pardon, for strength,—the ladder is drawn up, and O! how dreadful then will be the place, with its outer darkness, and the weeping and gnashing of teeth caused by despair.

Now, for a while the bridge into the eternal city, the new Jerusalem is down, but when the day of grace is over, it will be up, and there will be no entering in.

Therefore, why stand ye here all the day idle? Here, in the vineyard, where ye have been set work to do. You cannot say that no man has hired you, for you all have been baptized and have entered the service of Christ. You are all His labourers, He has all your names written down in His book, He has set you all your tasks to perform.

The night cometh when no man can work, therefore awake from sloth, and labour diligently while it is day, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

SERMON XVII.

BUSINESS AND PLEASURE.

(SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.)

S. LUKE, VIII. 7 14.

"Some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it."

"That which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

THORNS are very useful things indeed, and I do not think farmers could well get on without them. Imagine a corn field without a quick-set hedge round it. The cattle would get in and trample down or eat the crop. The children, when out of school, would race over it, pursuing one another through the standing corn, breaking the straws and pulling off the heads When our Lord uses the illustration of thorns in His parable of the sower and his seed, and likens the thorns to the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, He is not condemning these cares and

riches and pleasures as utterly bad and hurtful things, but only as bad and hurtful when they strangle the growth of good things. If thorns are scattered over the field, and the corn grows up amidst them, it will be a very poor crop, the weeds will draw the nutriment out of the soil, and under the shadow of the leaves the corn will not ripen.

At this time of the year, as I go along the roads I see everywhere the hedges are being cut down or trimmed. That is not to destroy wholly the quickset, but to make the thorns grow more compact, and not straggly, and also to prevent them from becoming so large as to overshadow the wheat or barley growing in the field, and so render it sickly, and hinder it from ripening properly.

Cares—that is the business of life, and pleasures and riches, need not in the least be hindrances to the growth of the Word in men's hearts, they may even serve as a protection to it.

Let us consider them separately.

Cares, or business. We are sent into this world to work. "In the sweat of thy face shall "thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground," such was the sentence of God on Adam and his

descendants after the fall. You would say it was a sentence of condemnation. But not so, wholly, for when Adam was sinless, in the full favour of God, God placed him in Eden "to dress it and to "keep it." He was not to be idle, not to saunter about the garden, and do nothing, but look at the flowers, and play with the animals, and lie under the trees, and eat fruit all the day. Far from it. No sooner was Adam made, than God set him to work. And consider, moreover, that the very first revelation of God that we have, is a revelation, not of God in infinity, doing nothing, but working at the creation of the world. If God, when first He manifests Himself to mankind, manifests Himself as a God at work; if God, when He had made man sinless and happy, in His image, set him at once to work;—then we may be quite sure that work is a very blessed, God-like thing. When Adam worked in Eden he was perfectly happy, no tear had run down his joyous cheek, no wrinkle had creased his smooth brow Work is a source of happiness Happiness is not to be found in idleness; in lounging about, doing nothing. Happy Eden is a scene of diligence. And when God cast man out of Paradise, He bade him work hard. By hard

work happiness is, in part, to be recovered. Diligence, the one thing Adam carried with him out of Eden, God bade him never lay aside; it was the thing that would recall Eden to him.

"Go to the ant thou sluggard," says the wise king; "consider her ways, and be wise: which "having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth "her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food "in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O "sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of sleep? "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little fold-"ing of the hands to sleep. So shall poverty "come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an "armed man."

See how Holy Scripture pours scorn of the indolent fellow who does not work, who—to use a common, vulgar expression—potters away his time.

There are various ways of working, none to be despised. A man may work with his hands or with his head. The great principle laid on all the sons of Adam, as that which is to govern their lives is—to be doing something continually. He who sits in an office and counts up sums in a ledger; she who knits stockings for her husband and children, or a blue jersey for her sailor-boy;

he who tills the land all day; he who is active as a politician in the affairs of state; she who is engaged in the kitchen cooking for meals, or washing up after meals; she who pulls up weeds along garden walks; he who writes books, or for the newspaper; he who invests capital in various ventures; he who keeps a shop; she who feeds the poultry and collects their eggs, all, all, in their several ways are working, and so fulfilling the commandment of God, and are finding, more or less, happiness in their work.

There are men of wealth who are not obliged to work for their living. That is quite true. But do you think that they are emancipated from the obligation to work? Far from it. They are bound to work every whit as much as is the poor labourer. They must, if they are to please God, and find happiness, set themselves a task, and do it vigorously. I think that poor hard working people very often fancy that rich people spend all their time doing nothing, but amusing themselves. They have no idea how hard some rich men work, but very generally it is at brain work, which is much more painful, responsible, and anxious work than muscular work.

If they do not work, then I pity them. They

are miserable creatures; and God is wrath with them for wasting their precious lives.

Now work entails care. Care is the anxiety which accompanies work; and the more important the work is, and responsible the worker, the greater must be his care.

No doubt you feel anxious, when set a duty in the fields, to do it well; if you have horses committed to you to look after, you have cares weighing on you, that the horses should not fall ill, or strain their legs, or gall their shoulders.

So your wife at home has the work of attending to the baby, and she has care on her mind that the child shall not tumble into the fire, if ill, that it shall be kept out of the cold.

So when a magistrate hears a case, he has great cares oppressing his mind, anxiety that the sentence he delivers should be a just one. And where the evidence is conflicting great is his anxiety. I have known magistrates who could not sleep night after night, so troubled were they about such matters, and which way to decide equitably. Then again, writers send forth their opinions in books, among men, and great responsibility devolves upon them. They feel it, and it oppresses them heavily.

So all work brings cares with it, and work being a blessed thing, cares are blessed also.

Another thing which may choke the Word, but which, in its place is not a bad thing, is *money*.

Folks must work for some object or other; and I do not suppose the making of a fortune is such a bad one. Riches may be a great blessing, or they may be a hindrance. The Blessed Man, says David, shall be like a tree planted by the waters' side, that shall bring forth his fruit in due season. A tree whose roots are near a river draws up the water and uses it in swelling its buds and leaves and fruit. It turns the water it imbibes to a purpose, and it only takes up as much water as it can make use of.

So it should be with riches, with superfluities; we, planted by the stream of wealth, should draw up from it what is necessary for our service, and what we can utilize. There is nothing wrong in so doing.

We work to get money. We want that money to support our life, to feed the mouths at home, to clothe ourselves and our families. If we have more money, our wants increase, but that is not wrong, for to supply them we distribute money, which circulates among all the trades which

derive their life and activity from those wants. If we are able by our work to accumulate still more money, we are not doing wrong, we set ourselves some reasonable object for which we collect it. We must work, and work brings in more or less money ; and when the money comes in, we must use it somehow.

A third thing that chokes the Word is *pleasure.* Yet pleasure in itself is not wrong. God when He made man surrounded him with everything that could give him pleasure.

I think pleasure here means relaxation from work, taking a holiday, rest. Perpetual holiday and idleness is a curse, and brings misery ; and all work and no holiday is misery and slavery. Work and rest in due proportions is what every man needs. God worked for six days, and rested on the seventh, to teach us that it s right for men to rest and enjoy themselves. If it is right for them to work, it is right for them also to rest.

All work and no repose, no pleasure, no holiday is horrible slavery, and contrary to God's law. And also, as I have said, all holiday, idleness, no work done, is contrary to God's law.

Do you think God is not glad to hear the merry

laughter of children? Do you think He is not as pleased to see you on a Sunday evening walking out in the fields or along the sea-side, with your wife and little ones, as He is to see you hard at work following the plough, and your wife at her washing, and the children at their schooling during the week? Of course He is.

You are fulfiling God's will when you are taking innocent enjoyment as truly as when you are doing hard work.

Adam and Eve in Paradise enjoyed a happy combination of work and play. And you may depend upon it, in the Heavenly Country, if we succeed in reaching it, we shall have work and enjoyment together there. It will not be an eternity of idleness, any more than it will be an eternity of hard labour; but there will be just sufficient of both to make us perfectly happy.

I have now shown you that the business, or cares, and the riches, and the pleasures of this life, are not, in themselves, bad; that, on the contrary, they are good things, and that in using them we are fulfilling God's will.

How then can they be said to choke the Word?

By being used immoderately.

For instance: A man whose whole mind is

set on business to the exclusion of the affairs of his soul, allows the thorns to choke the seed of the Word sown in his heart at baptism.

A man who cares only for money, who is either profusely extravagent or miserly, and who never thinks of the use to be made of money, the responsibility its possession entails on him, he also allows the thorns to choke the Word.

A man or a woman who does nothing all day but seek for amusement, whose time is spent in novel-reading, going out to parties, balls, concerts, plays, croquet-matches ; and who does no useful work at all ;—In such a person the Word is being strangled by the thorns and weeds.

I do not sav that these things are bad, they are nothing of the sort, but if they are *everything* that a person does and cares for, then the Word is being choked most certainly.

If business, or wealth, or pleasure interferes with the fulfilment of a plain duty, then it is like a quick-set hedge which has grown too tall, it must be lopped. If business, or wealth, or pleasure does not interfere with the fulfilment of duties, then it is not harmful.

SERMON XVIII.

HINDERING THE WEAK.

(QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.)

S. LUKE XVIII. 39.

"And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace."

As OUR Lord was near Jericho, going up to Jerusalem to His death, He passed a certain blind man, who sat by the way-side begging. Someone had told the blind man who was traversing the road. He had heard of the wondrous works wrought by Christ, how the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and the dead were raised up.

A great anxiety came on the poor fellow. It had been but a wretched life that he had led heretofore Poor, unable to work for his livelihood, there was nothing for him but a career of beggary. He could but sit, day after day, in the hedge, with the warm sun shining round him, but seeing it not. His day was made up of the same

things over and over again, with little of interest in them. He heard the humming of the insects in the hedge, all round him, as he sat there, solitary, and perhaps, the twittering of a lark high over head ; then some market people would pass. He could hear the sound of the cart wheels a long time before it came nigh, then he would hold out his hand, or his cap, and begin his wonted whine, "Pity a poor blind man." And the cart would pass, the joyous voices of the market people he had heard coming towards him, would die away in the distance. Perhaps they would drop him a copper, perhaps they passed him by without notice. And he waited on for the next troops of passers by, with only the rustle of the leaves, and the murmur of the busy bees in the hedge, to divert his mind.

It was a dismal life, indeed. And now, all at once, a hope woke up in his breast, a hope which was full of pain. Was it possible that he should receive his sight, and be able to see the beautiful sun, and the trees, and the blue lake ; be able to work for his livelihood instead of having to beg for it !

Jesus of Nazareth passed by. He who could, if He would, restore sight to his eyeballs. The

poor man, straining his dull white eyes towards the moving throng whose footsteps he heard tramping on the dusty road, stretched out his arms in an agony of hope, of supplication; and cried, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on "me." And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, "Thou Son of David, have "mercy on me."

Can you not understand it all. The disciples do not stop to think what it is that the poor fellow wants. Some coppers, no doubt; and they have no money. All that belongs to the party is in the bag which Judas carries. The whine of the beggar is troublesome, it interrupts what Jesus is saying, and which they are listening to; or perhaps their own conversation one with another.

"Hold your tongue," they say impatiently to the blind man, "We have nothing to give you."

But the beggar will not be put down thus. Silver and gold have they not, that is true; but it is not that that he requires. It is something far better than that. What he asks for is sight, that with manly independence he may be enabled to earn his living. He is tired of being a beggar, he longs to be able to dig in the fields, and by

the sweat of his brow to gain his bread. He is weary of the compulsory idleness forced on him by his infirmity. He asks money of the market folk, for that is all that they can give him. But when Jesus of Nazareth passeth by, it is not money that he asks, but his sight. "Jesus "stood, and commanded him to be brought unto "Him; and when he was come near, He asked "him, saying, What wilt thou that I should do "unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may "receive my sight."

I fear that what the multitude did to the poor blind man, is what many professing Christians are in the habit of doing now. Not perhaps understanding the wants, the sufferings of certain souls, they discourage them from crying to Jesus; they check their zeal, they hold them back from approaching the Saviour. They are too full of their own selfish interests to attend to the cry of those who desire healing of Christ; very often, they wholly misunderstand the purport of their cry.

All men are more or less blind, and straining for light. "Lord, that I may receive my sight!" should be the prayer of every one. For here we do not see the truth in all its clearness, but through a glass darkly, we know but in part; it will be

only when we have attained our heavenly kingdom that we shall see the truth unveiled in all its glory, face to face, and know even as we are known. Yet the whole of life is a striving after light, a seeking after truth. And if we are content only with what we know and see, and make no efforts to acquire more knowledge, and see deeper into the wondrous things of God's law and God's works, then we are in a very sad state. Jesus said, "For judgment I am come into this "world, that they which see not might see; and "that they which see might be made blind. And "some of the Pharisees which were with Him "heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we "blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were "blind, ye would have no sin; but now ye say, "We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

Do you understand? Jesus is come to open our eyes, to give us daily more and more insight into the Truth. If you are self-satisfied, and say, O! we know all about it, we know what is worth knowing, and we care for nothing more!—then you are blind, you say you see, and yet you are blind, walking in a sort of twilight; and what is saddest of all, you are content to be in it.

The blind man represents quite a different state

of mind from the Pharisees, that self-satisfied folk. He represents an earnest soul which is troubled because of its ignorance, which wants to know more, which is in daily distress because it cannot attain to the perfect Truth. To such Jesus will give light. "I am come into this world," He said, "that they which see not might see." That is, to give light to those who are in ignorance, but who are not satisfied to remain in ignorance.

Now how is it that many Christians treat these earnest, craving souls? They try to check their zeal, to divert them from the pursuit of the truth, with studied indifference, or ridicule; sometimes by throwing impediments wilfully in their way.

There is the very sad case of those who are actually blocking the road of some who would come to Christ; who by their bad example, their bad language, their bad advice, prevent some who would seek Jesus from approaching Him, who endeavour to turn them back, and make them content to remain in their blindness. Such cases are very sad. I have known instances of farmers, and manufacturers, who, when some of the young people working for them desired leave to go for a day from their work to be confirmed, that is, to receive the grace of God to enlighten their

eyes, and to strengthen their hearts, have refused them permission of absence. This is standing between them and Christ. I have known good earnest lads and girls in factories and workshops, who were regular communicants, and whom their companions incessantly assailed with ridicule, profane speeches, and insult. They tried hard to stand in the way between these brave young folk and Jesus Christ whom they sought. There was a young man, a watchmaker's assistant, I knew many years ago; he was not very bright in his intellect, but he was earnest in his religion, and with a very remarkable capacity for attaining a clear vision of the truths of the Catholic Faith. He used, once a month, on Sunday, early, to go to church to receive his Lord's Body and Blood. His master and mistress, worldly, prejudiced people, bitterly resented his being a communicant. I have known his mistress and the servant girl to follow him down the street to the church, rattling pans and fireirons after him, to rouse the people along the street to join them in jeering him. He came back to no breakfast; and if he went to church at eleven o'clock, when he returned, there was no dinner for him. What was this but standing in the way, between him and his Saviour?

Now I ask you to be very careful how you rebuke those who would come to Jesus, those who cry piteously to Him for light. If in your own families you see a child, or a sister, or a brother, craving for the Truth, seeking God in his Word, drawing near to Christ in His Sacraments, ordering the life in close walk to the rule of God's commandments, watchful against sin, wakeful to the call of God,—then, beware how you hinder that soul.

One night Samuel lay in his bed, and the voice of God spake to him, calling, "Samuel, Samuel!" The child rose, and went to Eli, the High Priest, and asked if it were he who called. Eli bade him "Lie down again." Again God called. Again the little boy ran to the Priest, and again he bade him "Lie down again."

O! how often when souls are stirred with the consciousness of sin, with the necessity of working for God, or striving after light; when they turn to their companions and guides, all the advice they get is to "lie down again." They are bidden, "Go to sleep, take it easy, do not trouble your-"selves There is no necessity for alarm, anxiety "about the soul. There is no light to be strained "after. We must be content to walk in darkness.

"There is nothing to be done, we are justified "by faith only; Lie down again."

What is it that God's voice calls us to? Why work for Him. When the soul is wakened, what should it do? Why labour for light. There is plenty to be done. Never through life should we lie down again, as if we had nothing to do. "He "that will love life and see good days, let him "refrain his tongue from evil, and do good; let "him seek peace, and ensue it."

When I was at Cambridge, there was a young student at the University, who was much troubled in conscience, had scruples about some religious matters; and he went to his tutor, an old college fellow, to speak about them, and ask of him advice. "Scruples! conscientious troubles!" exclaimed the tutor, "uneasiness of mind! Never "felt them myself. What are you to do? Don't "trouble yourself about them. Take a glass of "port wine." It was like Eli's advice to Samuel, "Lie down again."

You, in your families, among your friends, are sure to meet with instances in which God calls to certain souls. Then the souls trembling and astonished rise, and strain towards Christ. "Surely thou didst call me!" the soul says when

it has heard the voice. What are you to do in such cases. Beware of checking them, beware of standing between them and Christ, by bad advice or example. Do not bid them, "Lie down "again," but lead them on on their way to the Saviour. If they are called, they are called by God; if they arise, they rise to walk to Him. How are you to lead them? By pointing out to them that the way that leads to Christ is the path of obedience. Let such as are thus called seek advice of their clergyman. When Jesus stood still for the blind man, He bade his disciples bring the man to him. The blind man could not have found his way alone. Often and often, earnest souls, when awoke to their need of light, because they refuse guidance, stumble and fall into all sorts of strange heresies and mischievous conceits. Let them seek guidance of their spiritual pastors, who have received commission from the Lord Jesus to bring them to Him.

That is an awful sentence pronounced by Christ against such as should put impediments in the way of those who seek Him. "Woe unto the "world because of offences! for it must needs be "that offences come; but woe to that man by "whom the offence cometh."

"Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before "the blind," said God when He gave His law to ancient Israel, and the same law applies spiritually to us. Thou shalt not put any hindrance in the way of the dark soul that craveth for light, and seeketh to attain it.

SERMON XIX.

FORGETFULNESS OF SELF.

(ASH WEDNESDAY.)

EXOD. XXXVIII. 8.

"And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

MOSES made the tabernacle in the wilderness according to the pattern shown him in the mount, with the ark of the mercy-seat, the table of the shew-bread, the altar of incense, and the golden candlestick with its seven lamps. These all went inside the tabernacle. You had to lift the rich curtains to enter in and see them. Outside was a court, and in this court were the altar of burnt offering and the brazen laver. And the brazen laver was made, we are told, of the looking glasses of the women who crowded to the door of the tabernacle. As they thus thronged

the door in crowds,—in the margin you will read that they "assembled by troops"—Moses took from them their mirrors, and melted them up, and of these mirrors made the great brass font for purification.

Mirrors in those days were not made of glass silvered with mercury as they are now, but were pieces of metal brought to a very high polish. You see children look at their faces in spoons; the silver of the spoons when carefully attended to by a tidy servant, will become as polished as a looking glass. So the metal of the mirrors used by the Israelitish women was capable of reflecting faces with great perfection. On leaving Egypt, the Hebrew women no doubt brought with them mirrors such as were commonly used by the Egyptians. Many specimens of these ancient articles of toilette have been preserved among the tombs of Egypt to this day. They are made of a mixed metal, chiefly copper, and are, indeed, a sort of brass, and are susceptible of a lustre which has been even partially revived at the present day, in some of those discovered at Thebes, though buried in the earth for many centuries. The mirror itself is nearly round, inserted into a handle of wood, stone, or metal.

like a Japanese fan; and the handle is carved and ornamented.

The metal of which the mirrors were composed, being liable to rust and tarnish, required to be constantly kept bright. The Wise man speaking of Wisdom likens her to a mirror that has not become blotched with rust, but which reflects the sun with almost the full glory of that luminary. "She is the brightness of the everlasting light, "the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and "the image of His goodness." (Wisd. vii. 26.) Jesus the Son of Sirach compares an enemy to a looking glass with rust on it. The rust stains are spite and hatred, he pretends to be a friend, and yet the rust is still in him, if once it be suffered to corrode the surface. "Take good "heed and beware of him, and thou shalt be "unto him as if thou hadst wiped a looking-"glass, and thou shalt know that his rust hath "not been altogether wiped away." (Ecclus. xii. 11.) The Egyptian, and no doubt the Hebrew mirrors were kept polished by means of pounded pumice-stone, rubbed on with a sponge, which was generally suspended from the mirror.

I suspect there is some lesson to be learned from the act of Moses confiscating these mirrors

of the women who crowded to the door of the tabernacle. What are mirrors used for? For persons to look at the reflection of their own faces in them. A woman's mirror was hung to her belt, and was an ornament she carried about with her. The Hebrew women came to the door of the tabernacle in troops, and Moses made them all hand over to him the mirrors they carried with them, that he might melt them up, and use them outside the door.

If the objeet for which mirrors are made is self-contemplation, and the mirrors are kept outside the tabernacle door,—I suspect the meaning is, that self-consideration, thoughts of self, self-satisfaction, are not to be brought into the holy place, which is dedicated to God, to prayer and praise. People do not generally sit before their glasses to consider how ugly they are, they spend a long time in front of them in disguising defects and in enhancing beauties. Mirrors serve as instruments of vanity, consequently we may say that another lesson taught by the action of Moses in this matter, is, that vanity is to be excluded from the holy place. If women come to Church dressed out in all their splendour, not in modest and becoming

attire, as is meet for them when approaching the sanctuary of God; but if they are arrayed to catch the eye of the congregation, then they have brought their looking glasses with them inside the tabernacle, and not left them at the door.

But it is not against the vanity of dress invading the sanctuary, that I am going to speak. It is of self-seeking, self-contemplation, self-satisfaction, brought into the tabernacle. It is against that miserable habit which some indulge in, of never being able to take their eyes or thoughts off themselves and their own doings. They hold up, as it were, perpetually, a mirror before them, and their own self, its perfections, its graces, its troubles, occupy their whole horizon. If they talk, it is about what *I* think, *I* wish, *I* dislike, *I* am going to do, *I* suffer.

There is an old palace at Würzburg, in which is a chamber lined with mirrors. You stand in the middle, and you see yourself reflected from every wall an infinite number of times. For each wall reflects the wall opposite, with its reflection of you, and also the reflection of you from the opposite side taken by itself, and so on and on, till you are multiplied into infinity, there is actually no end to the I, I, I, I, which is seen.

There are many people who seem to live perpetually in such a room. There perspective is only of self indefinitely repeated, to their infinite gratification. No other subject interests them than themselves, every event is estimated as it concerns self. They can speak, they can think of nothing else. If they talk, it is of self. Try with them any other subject, their eyes look dull, their expression is one of listlessness, the subject raises no emotion in their breasts, till by some chance it is led to affect themselves, then at once interest is kindled, the face, the eye lights up.

Such people may not be bad sort of folk, by any means. They may be hospitable, charitable, religious; and yet they will be very far from the kingdom of God, for the simple reason, that the motive of every act is not a sense of duty, or the love of God, but selfishness.

Selfishness may pervade and poison the religious life. What is the motive governing even many earnest people? Why do they pray, labour at works of charity, strive to do good? If you come to examine closely their motives, you will find that it is, eagerness for their own souls. A good thing it is for us to be careful for our souls, and to labour for them. But that should be a

motive secondary to love of God, and desire to advance His glory. How wonderful was the unselfishness of S. Paul! he said, "I could wish "myself accursed,—or seperated from Christ, for "my brethren, my kinsman according to the "flesh." That is,—if he could only be sure that the Jews would embrace the Gospel, and draw to the love and worship of Jesus Christ, cheer fully would he pass eternity in the outer darkness, away from the light of Christ's presence.

The story is told of an Egyptian hermit, that he had a young disciple. One day the young man found his old master weeping bitterly. "Why "do you cry, my father?" "Alas! my son, I "dreamed last night, that I saw you stand "before the judgment-seat of Christ, and that "you were cast out for ever from Heaven." "Well," said the disciple, "Whatever is God's "will, pleases me."

And next night, the old master saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing in His majesty, holding a dazzling crown in his hand, and on the crown was written the name of the disciple whose will was so perfectly agreed with the will of God.

The motive for our actions should be in

accordance with the petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in "Heaven."

Now if selfishness is so odious, it is especially so in the house of God. The looking-glasses should be left outside. When you come to Church, try not to bring self-seeking, and self-sufficiency, and self-admiration with you.

"God, I thank thee that I am not as other "men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or "even as this publican; *I* fast twice in the week, "*I* give tithes of all that I possess." The Pharisee had carried his looking-glass with him into the temple.

When you hear a sermon on some sin, on some infirmity or other, you think, Ah! this applies admirably to so and so, but not to me. I would never be guilty of the things so-and-so has committed. How uncomfortable he must feel when he hears this sermon. That person has brought his looking-glass into Church with him, instead of leaving it outside.

Now we are entering on a holy season. We stand, as it were, at the door of Lent, let us leave our looking-glasses outside. Let us put away our self-seeking, our incessant thoughts of

self. It is a time, indeed, for self-examination, but not with the looking-glass. It is a time for weighing our conduct, estimating our thoughts, and measuring our words, for penitence, not for self-admiration. I feel convinced that if you would take a bit of paper, and make a stroke on it with a pencil whenever you used the pronouns *I* and *me*, you would be amazed at the end of the day to find out how much self has been before your thoughts.

There is no quality so beautiful as unselfishness, and there is none so detestable as selfishness, and that even in the estimation of men. How much more so in the sight of God. The picture of perfect unselfishness is that drawn by S. Paul, of charity, for charity is only another name for unselfishness. "Charity suffereth "long and is kind, charity envieth not, charity "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not "behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is "not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth "not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth "all things, endureth all things."

SERMON XX.

THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT.

(FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.)

S. MATT. IV. 1.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil."

DOES it not seem a singular thing to you that the first thing the Spirit does after He has visibly descended upon Our Lord in bodily shape as a dove, is to lead Him into that which is exceedingly disagreeable. Directly Christ is baptized, the Holy Spirit urges Him away from the society of men, from comfort, and from converse with His relations and disciples, into the wilderness, where He will be quite alone, in a miserable, barren, weary land, covered with rocks and sand, roamed over by wild beasts.

The Spirit led Him to a very disagreeable place. Moreover, the Spirit led Him to where there was nothing to eat, where there were no fields, where

He could not pluck the ears of corn, no cottages where He might ask for food, where, in fact, there was no chance of living, except for hunters who could pursue and kill the game. So that the impulsion which drove the Saviour into the wilderness, was one which thrust Him into great want of subsistence.

The Spirit led Him into great *personal discomfort.* There was something more. Many a man in olden times went into the deserts of Egypt and Palestine, to find rest from the strife and tribulations of the world, to be free from the worry of life, to be out of the way of visitors, and tittle-tattle, and the tedious emptiness of society ; to get quit of the anxieties of business, of bills, of money speculations, and the like. In the desert they lived to God, in calm content, the days glided round in the practice of tilling a little field, and reading and prayer. It was a quiet, happy life, and the hermits were a cheerful folk, having no cares to trouble them.

But when the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, it was not to be quiet, and free from anxiety, but to be pestered with the Devil, at Him constantly and tempting Him.

The Spirit led Him into great *spiritual conflict.*

I think it is a very remarkable thing that thus the first inspiration of the Spirit recorded in the Gospels, is one which carries our Blessed Lord into a disagreeable place, to disagreeable bodily hardships, and to disagreeable spiritual distresses. One would have expected that the Spirit would at once have shed ineffable calm, and given perfect rest. Not so! the Spirit drives into a condition remote from rest and calm, into discomfort and worry. And I dare say it is the thought of many of you, that an out-pouring of the Spirit on you would make you at ease, "set "you at liberty," as it is called, make your places pleasant, and your paths smooth, change all want to satisfaction, and end all conflict.

It is a thing one hears not unfrequently expressed. I have visited a sick person, and tried to prepare her for death, and have therefore spoken of temptation, and anxiety about the soul. "Oh!" said she; "I have not had any "worry, anxiety or temptation, for twenty-two "years. The Spirit led me out of all that on "six o'clock of a Monday evening, in the month "of January, eighteen hundred and"—I forget the exact year. The only thing I could say, was, "That was no guiding of the Spirit of God, I

"fear For when He led our Blessed Lord, it "was to nothing of the sort, but to something "quite different, the very reverse."

When the Spirit of God carried Ezekiel away, it was not to calm and absence of distress. The prophet says, "The Spirit lifted me up, and took "me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat "of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was "strong upon me." (Ezek. iii. 14.) When the Spirit caught up and bare away Philip the Deacon, it was to place him at Azotus, where he might labour abundantly, and might preach in every city, till he came to Cæsarea.

When Obadiah met Elijah, and the prophet ordered the governor of Ahab's house to go to the king and tell him that he, Elijah, was there, Obadiah hesitated. He knew that if Ahab saw Elijah, as he hated him, he would probably raise his sword against him, or throw him into irons. Elijah would run great risk if he encountered Ahab, the meeting could not but be unpleasant if not dangerous to the prophet. So Obadiah said, "As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no "nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not "sent to seek thee: and when they said, he is "not there, he took an oath of the kingdom and

"nation, that they found thee not. And now "thou sayest, go, tell thy lord, behold, Elijah is "here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I "am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord "shall carry thee whither I know not." (1 Kings, xviii. 10-12.)

You see Obadiah had got just the notion some people have now of the Holy Spirit, that his function is to lift and carry away people out of uncomfortable positions, and put them in ease and security. But he was altogether wrong. The Spirit of God had, on the contrary, driven Elijah out of his hiding place where he was quite safe, and had thrust him into the very midst of extreme danger: the Spirit brought him face to face with the man who sought his life. And why so? Was it to patch up the quarrel with him, and make friends? Not so: it was to exasperate him to the highest degree, by rough speech and by rougher action. When Ahab saw him, he said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" And Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel; "but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye "have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, "and thou hast followed Baalam". And not content with this, he proceeded to stir up the

people to put to death the favourite priests of Ahab and Jezebel, four hundred and fifty men, in defiance of the king, before his very face.

Well! let us look the facts of the case plainly in the face. What do you see? That the action of the Spirit of the Lord in the world, is one of impulsion to difficult, unpleasant, and dangerous duties.

We are accustomed to make our Christian life a summer holiday, an easy jaunt, full of comfort and pleasure and ease. Our religious duties we take easily. If we have to go to Church, we must not have it too far from our doors, the sky must be clear, the road dry. If there is a kindness to be done to another, it must not take very much trouble, be very irksome. If we have to run a race, as S. Paul tells us, why, we will run it leisurely, without getting too hot, or losing our wind.

Is it not true that we shrink and slink from any paths which lead into the wilderness, even though it be God's Spirit which is urging us forward, God's hand which points thither? Is it not true that there is paltry fretting, querulous complaining; instead of effort; resolve passing off like an April shower of tears, instead of the sun-

light of sympathy with the good, or the lightning of holy indignation against wrong? Is it not true that in our self-composure we seek to turn our Christianity into a thing that will render duty the smoothest thing on earth, and turn the Christian warfare into a game of bowls?

"Once let a man insult the majesty of duty, "by waiting till its commands shall become "easy, and he must be disowned as an outlaw "from her realm. If he calculate on some happy "influences that are to shape him into some-"thing nobler, if he once regard his moral nature, "not as an authoritative power invested within its "sphere with a divine omnipotence that speaks "and it is done, but as passive material to be "worked by the ingenuity of circumstances into "something that is good,—it is all over with "him; the ascendency of conscience is gone, col-"lapse and ruin have begun. The mind has "fallen into contentment with the mere concep-"tion,—the fable, and far off imagination of "excellence, confounds the look of duty which is "indeed a fair vision, with the strife and effort, "the weary tension of resolve, the doubt, the "prayers, the tears, which bring our Christian "manhood to exhaustion. Pleasant is it to

"entertain the picture of ourselves in some future "scene, planning wisely, feeling nobly, and "executing with the holy triumph of the will; "but 'tis a different thing,—not in the green "avenues of the future, but in the hot dust of "the present moment,—not in the dramatic "positions of the fancy, but in the plain prosaic "*now*,—to do the duty that waits and wants us, "and put forth an instant and reverential hand "to the noonday or evening task." *

The path of duty is the path of safety, and it is along that path alone, though it may lead to a wilderness, to bodily and spiritual suffering, that the Spirit leads all those who suffer themselves to be guided by Him.

Duties generally lie very plainly before us, and look often very ugly. They entail much trouble, perhaps some ridicule, at all events, they are not easy to do, and to leave them undone would be far more agreeable. We think it impossible that we can do them, they are too hard, too irksome, the flesh is weak, and the spirit is unwilling, and so the wilderness is shirked. But, however hard a duty may seem, however insuperable objections may appear that stand in

* J. Martineau, Endeavours, I. pp. 130—131.

the way of its performance, it can be done, the Spirit leading us. A word from the Lord covereth the barren wilderness with manna, it brings water-springs out of a dry ground. A word from the Lord divideth the flames of fire, and suffers Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to stand amidst them unhurt. A word from the Lord openeth a pathway through the sea, that the people may pass over. A word from the Lord shuts the lion's mouths upon Daniel, and loosed the chains from off the hands and feet of Peter.

The great lesson which it behoves all who have been baptized to learn from Christ led by the Spirit into the wilderness, is one they are far too apt to forget,—that the Spirit does not lead them to ease and carelessness, and spiritual comfort. It calls them to a hard fight, to much trial, to many a temptation, and often to keen suffering. Where He leads them they must follow, or they forfeit His guidance. It was the guiding of the Spirit that brought martyrs to their awful death, Lawrence to his gridiron, Andrew to the Cross, Catherine to her wheel set with knives, Lucy to the plucking out of her eyes.

Oh! what a wilderness of woes was that to

which the Spirit led those holy ones of old! A region of horrors, where were wild beasts to tear and devour, the rack, the thumbscrew, the iron rakes to torture, the sword, the knife, the club, the cross to slay! And did they shrink? No, not they. "Let thy good Spirit lead me forth "into the land of righteousness!" They went through that great and terrible wilderness into which the Spirit drove them, and came out into the Land of Righteousness, the lot of their inheritance.

We are not called to such trials, but let us not think that our Christian calling is to be one of ease without trials, of mossy lawns and not of barren wilderness. Whereever conscience points, there go, for that is the leading of the Spirit.

"Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Should'st lead me on;
I loved to choose and see Thy path; but now
Lead Thou me on

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years!

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on:
O'er moor and fen, o'er cragg and torrent, till
The night is gone:
And with the morn, these awful faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

SERMON XXI.

ON CHRIST SEEKING THE LOST.

(2ND SUNDAY IN LENT.)

ST. LUKE, XIX. 10.

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

SUCH is our Lord's own account of His mission in the world. "I came not to call the righteous, "but sinners to repentance." "He came" says St. Paul, "and preached peace to you which were "afar off, and to them that were nigh." When He sent His apostles forth to preach in every city of Palestine, it was with this commission, "Go "to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." He represented Himself in parable as a shepherd leaving the ninety and nine of His flock that were safe, that He might go in search of the one sheep that was lost. "And when He hath found "it, He layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing."

The work of His church after He left was to be the same. He likened it to a woman search-

ing diligently with a candle for her lost piece of money.

The world to which Christ came needed such a work as that of Jesus. It was lost in darkness and sin. The world in its wisdom knew not God. It had wandered further and further from the light of primitive revelation. I have heard of poor fellows who have lost their way in mines, their lamps have gone out after many hours of vain rambling in search of the way, and then they have sat them down in despair, in the darkness, to die. So was it with the old world. It could not find the light, some more hopeful spirits struggled on in search of it, but the many sat down in listless despair of finding the truth and seeing the light, in settled scepticism.

And the moral condition of the old world was terrible. The old writers who give us an account of the state of society among the civilized nations of antiquity, give us a terrible insight into the corruption of morals then prevalent. You know, perhaps, that in the year 79, not so long after Christ's death, the volcano of Vesuvius buried an old town called Pompeii under a bed of ashes. At the same time another city, Herculaneum was buried under a tide of melted

rock, or lava. These cities have, of late years, in part, been dug out; and we see in their ruins a photograph of life in the cultivated Roman world at the time when Christ's revelation was beginning to dawn on the world. There is a museum at Naples, in which are placed the multitude of curious things found in these old cities. They have found there baker's shops with loaves on the counter, shrivelled up of course; apothecaries shops with their drugs and weights and scales, and pestle and mortar for compounding powders and pills; wine-shops with all that are needed for a tavern; private residences, and in the ladies' apartment, all her articles of toilet, pomatum pots, brushes, combs, even her little box of paint and brush for giving artificial roses to her cheeks. They have found the scribbles on the walls made by school-boys with their pencils as they came home from school. In these two cities, buried for one thousand eight hundred and more years, we see what Romans were in those days, almost to the life.

Well! when these towns were cleared of their covering, it was found that there were things too foul, too horrible for Christian eyes to contemplate. These have been placed in a room apart

in the museum at Naples, and people are not allowed to go into it without special permission from the authorities. Think what must have been the condition of society when foulnesses of this sort were exposed unblushingly before all eyes, in the streets, on the walls of the chambers. How could children grow up with any sense of modesty, any horror of evil, when from earliest infancy their fancies were fed with filth?

Enough of this. It shews us what a miserable condition the old world was in, when Christ proclaimed, "the Son of Man is come to seek "and to save that which was lost."

Truly ancient civilized society was diseased to the very core, "the whole head was sick, the "whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot, even "unto the crown of the head there was no sound-"ness in it, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying "sores."

Then, when the world was in this awful condition of hopeless misery, Jesus Christ the God-Man came into the world, to seek that human nature which had gone so far astray, which had rambled in the wilderness in quest of nourishment, and had been torn with troubles, and was foot-sore with wanderings; He came to save it.

Laying that human nature on His shoulders, taking our flesh upon Him, He began the work of regeneration, of saving that which was lost; that He might bring mankind back to His Father rejoicing.

The gospel narrative exhibits our Blessed Lord labouring at the fulfilment of the work He had taken upon Him. It exhibits to us the Son of Man seeking and saving those which were lost.

He went about seeking. With His teaching He sought the hearts of men, stirring up dead consciences, reviving them to a sense of the sacred obligations of duty. Many who heard Him, when He reproached their evil deeds, were "cut to the heart," "were pricked in their heads." Wonderful was the case of the woman taken in adultery brought to Him by the Jews, impatient to stone her to death. He wrote on the ground as though unnoticing them, then lifted Himself up, and said, "He that is without sin among you, "let him cast a stone at her." And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

A little sentence, but how effective it was! Those dull consciences, cased with self-righteousness, were pierced by it. For once they began to be moved with true conviction of sin. Those

hearts were like the pool of Siloam, into which that sentence like an angel descended, and which it now troubled with healing effect.

Jesus sought by His miracles; those tender signs of sympathy with the sufferings of poor infirm men opened their hearts to receive medicine for their souls. "Go sin no more, lest a worse "thing come upon thee."

Jesus sought by His parables; those simple stories bore deep truths hidden under the surface, men would listen to them who would be impatient of direct teaching; parables would stick in minds out of which maxims might slip.

Jesus sought by every means available. He sought the people through their hunger, the sons of Zebedee He caught by their nets; He sought Matthew by a word, Peter by a look, the woman with the issue of blood, by the hem of His garment, even Judas by a kiss.

And as in life, so in death. He sought the thief who hung at His side, to bring him with Him to Paradise; His murderers He sought to save by His intercessory prayer, "Father forgive "them, for they know not what they do!"

And when all was finished, He bowed His head, by that gesture He called to Him the

soldier. It was as though He said, "Come "Longinus, bring hither thy spear. Through "life have I, the Son of Man, been seeking that "I might save those which were lost. Come "now, and thrust thy spear into my side, and "transfix my heart, that from thence, as thou "drawest forth thy spear, there may flow the "streams of water and blood, which may, in the "church that I have founded, continue my work, "and till time shall be no more seek and save "that which was lost."

Was then the work of Jesus ended when He bowed the head and gave up the ghost? O no! no! He did but go away, yet He left behind the two pence with the host of His inn, wherewith those that were lost might be restored. The fountains opened by the soldier's spear flow on; and still in the Church of God, is the work of Jesus being continued of seeking and saving that which was lost.

Before He left the world, He provided that His work should be carried on. He commissioned His apostolic ministry to continue it. "As my "Father hath sent me," He said "even so send I "you." As my Father hath sent me to seek by word of exhortation, by earnest entreaty, by

sympathy, by intercession, by example, by sacrifice, those that were lost, and to bring them to salvation, even so send I you. "Go ye into "all the world, and preach the gospel unto every "creature. And lo! I am with you always even "unto the end of the world."

What is it then which is being carried on incessantly in the Church of God? It is the work of Christ. Every rite, every sacrament, is a stretching forth of the hands of Christ towards His people to seek and save that which was lost.

When a priest baptizes, what is it? Is it only a form, words and water? Oh no! no! It is the river of the water of life flowing out of the pierced side reaching to the little child and laving it, it is Jesus seeking the infant and washing off the guilt of Adam, that He may take it into His fold, and that He may save it.

When a Bishop lays his hands in Confirmation on the heads of candidates, what is it! Is it merely a ceremony, an outward form only? O no! no! it is Jesus seeking the young hearts that He may pour into them divine strength to enable them to be good soldiers of the cross and manfully to fight against sin, the world and the devil.

When the sinner turns in broken hearted confession to God, and absolution is pronounced, what is it? A string of idle words? O no! once more, no! It is the Blood of Jesus Christ that rushed from His side on the cross of Calvary which is doing its destined work. The bunch of bitter hyssop is dipped in that precious red stream, and is sprinkled over the unclean, and his sin and his iniquity are remembered no more.

When a priest stands at the altar with bread and wine before him, and utters the words of consecration, and then invites to the sacred feast, what is it? A memorial only? O no! no! It is Christ lifting up His pierced hands in intercession, and stepping down to the hearts of the communicants, that He may enter in and there abide, and work out their salvation.

When the priest preaches to you from the pulpit, what is it! Only a man in a black gown, or a white surplice, talking for twenty minutes because he is paid to do so? No! no! it is the messenger of Christ doing Christ's work, appealing to your consciences, bidding them wake up, and seek the Lord while He may be found, that He may save you.

And now, in conclusion, I ask you earnestly to

consider this wonderful work of Christ going on throughout the world, wherever His Church is founded; and then lift up your hearts in gratitude to Him for His great goodness, that you who were afar off He has brought nigh by the blood of His cross; that you who were in bondage of sin, He hath set free; that you who were in darkness He hath brought to the light; that you who were in error, He hath guided aright. Thank Him for every good gift that He has bestowed upon you, for His word, His ministry, His Sacraments, thank Him that He has not left you to struggle on alone in this world, but has Himself come near to help you, has come to you in His Church and so He might seek and save that which was lost.

SERMON XXII.

THE DUMB SPIRIT.

(THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.)

S. LUKE, XI. 14.

"Jesus was casting out a devil, and it was dumb."

THE miracles of our Blessed Lord are not to be regarded only as historical events, the accounts of them as records of the exhibition of marvellous power possessed by Him, and exercised out of His compassion for the sufferings of those who were brought unto Him. They are to be regarded by us likewise as parables, as containing in them some lesson for our spiritual instruction. Each mighty work is a sermon.

In most of the other miracles recorded, there are circumstances stated which serve to individualize the person who is healed. We are told his name, his dwelling place, or his station in life,—but on this occasion it is simply *one* who is brought to Christ.

"Then was brought unto Him one possessed "with a devil, blind and dumb; and He healed "him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both "spake and saw." This is all S. Matthew says about the man, and S. Luke is not more explicit, he says, "Jesus was casting out a devil, and it "was dumb. And it came to pass when the devil "was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people "wondered."

It is scarcely possible to have a more vague, lightly-touched story of so great a miracle. None of the Evangelists enter into the smallest particulars: it is a man who is healed, that is all we know; whether he were rich, poor, where he lived, what was his family, all that is passed over in silence. Nor is the manner of his healing particularized. It is as vague as the rest. How different is the account of other persons healed of their infirmities. We know something about them; there is blind Bartimæus, who sat by the wayside begging, we know what he said, what our Lord did to him. There is Mary Magdalene out of whom our Lord cast seven devils, we know her history. There is the man with the unclean spirit who dwelt in tombs in the country of the Gadarenes; we know how men

tried to bind him with fetters and chains, and how he wandered about the mountains, howling and cutting himself with stones; we know how he cried with a loud voice to Christ, and how the Lord expelled the devil. There is the impotent man who was healed in the sheep market. We know how long the poor fellow had been diseased, —thirty and eight years, we have all the particulars of his case, what he said, and how Christ healed him. So it is with a host of other cases, we have plenty of detail about them, but this instance is singular by its being wholly devoid of all personal detail; we know nothing of who the man was, nothing of how the Lord healed him. And I will tell you why I think that this case is left so vague, without a touch of colour, with scarce an outline.

The other miracles are all, as I said parables. They illustrate the mode of Christ's dealing with spiritual sicknesses analogous to those of the body which He cured. All men are not afflicted with the same infirmities, and therefore the meaning of the miracle has a special reference to certain classes of souls. But this miracle does not apply to any class, but to all mankind. The whole of mankind, when Christ came into the

world, was deaf, and blind, and dumb, and there is no particularization of the way in which the man is healed, because there are various ways in which Christ deals with mankind. This *one* who is dumb and blind is a type of the whole human race. That race is one, and when Christ entered the world, He found it blind to the true light that shined, deaf to the voices of creation, that speak in inarticulate whispers as witness to God, dumb, as the lips spake not in praise and prayer.

The Greek word in the original signifies that the man was deaf and dumb. You know that generally the two infirmities go together. S. Matthew adds that he was blind.

You see here the miserable condition into which evil brings man. It deafens him to the voice of God speaking to his conscience, it blinds him to the truth which is in Christ Jesus; it silences his mouth, so that he does not thank God for what has been given, and cannot even ask God to give him that which he has not, to open his eyes and unclose his ears.

Evil shuts the eyes against seeing opportunities, closes the ears against hearing of them. This man is in a far more helpless state than blind Bartimæus. He could hear the tread of

the multitude accompanying Jesus as He passed by, and was therefore aware of his opportunity, and seized it. The deaf and dumb man who could see Jesus could come to Him, throw himself at His feet, and stretch out his hands to Him in speechless supplication.

But this poor wretch would have sat in dull ignorance and indifference whilst Jesus was before him, able and ready to relieve him, without being aware of the fact, and making a sign that he wanted help.

It is indeed a true symbol of the condition to which evil will bring a man, a condition of helpless incapacity for amendment, a condition of indifference to goodness. What tyranny it exercises! Before leaving one man, the devil rent him sore; the man of Gadara it drove among tombs and made him cut himself with stones; the woman with the spirit of infirmity it bowed for eighteen years, the young man it flung into fire and water. This poor wretch it blinds, and deafens, and deprives of speech.

Observe that one effect of the devil possessing this man is to make him dumb. The man was not born so. He became so through possession. It was one of the results of evil entering into him

that he lost his speech. I am only going to speak to you to-day on this one point, and not on the deafness and blindness of the man.

The man represents, as I have said, the human race. When sin entered into the world and passed upon all men, it silenced their voices.

The voice is to be used by man in prayer and praise,—in prayer for help and light, and in praise for mercies bestowed.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work; one day telleth another, and one night certifieth another. All creation praises God David calls on all creatures to praise God, mountains and hills, fruitful trees and cedars, beasts and all cattle, worms and feathered fowls, kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the world, young men and maidens, old men and children, to join in one great choir, that the whole of the earth may ring with praise to God the Creator. But there is silence here and there. The sinner is dumb. He has lost the sense of gratitude, and therefore he will not join in the eucharistic concert.

Yet if praise be refused by man, he imperils those powers and graces which remain to him.

In spiritual things the dumb man will speedily become deaf, and the deaf and dumb become blind.

Adam was created out of the dust of the earth, and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. He saw himself perfect in every part, made in the image of God. Do we hear of his having given thanks to God for what He had done? No. God translated him into Eden, and out of the ground made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; and brought a river clear as crystal to water the garden, and planted in the midst the tree of life, of which Adam might eat and not die. In Eden, did the man that God had formed and placed there thank Him? No.

God does more. Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam. Does the man praise God? No.

Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him. Then the Lord God formed woman to be his companion; and Adam said, "This is "now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."

And now does he utter a word of praise and thanks to God? No, not one.

The ingratitude of Adam has struck many commentators. He takes everything that God does for him as a matter of course; and, say commentators, it is no wonder that such a thankless fellow should fall and lose what he had not the grace to praise God for. No wonder that he who glorified not God, should be ready, at the first breath of temptation, to lapse from his high estate.

Just as Adam lost his privileges through ingratitude, so will you fall from yours, if you are dumb and refuse thanks for them.

It was the same with the children of Israel, "They forgat God their Saviour, and the wonderful works which He had shewed them," and therefore they were given over to captivity, and lost that blessed land which had been given to their forefathers.

The voice is given to man also to be exercised in acknowledgment of sin, and in prayer for the grace of God.

Adam, when he had sinned, was questioned by God, that he might confess his sin. When he was in Eden and had not eaten of the forbidden

fruit, when all went well with him, he had lost his voice, he had not thanked God. Directly he has sinned, God calls forth his voice in the way in which he must now exercise it,—in confession of sin. "The Lord God called unto Adam, and "said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was "afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. "And He said, Who told thee that thou was "naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof "I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? "And the man said, The woman whom Thou "gavest to live with me, she gave me of the tree, "*and I did eat.* And the Lord God said unto the "woman, What is this that thou hast done? "And the woman said The serpent beguiled me, "*and I did eat.*" No question is asked of the serpent. But God does catechise the man and the woman, to teach them that thenceforth, sin must be accompanied by confession. If confession of sin be withholden, then indeed does man become dumb.

Cain when he had slain his brother was asked by God, "where is Abel thy brother?" He answered "I know not." He made no confession. Adam and Eve had confessed their sin, and hope

of recovery was held out to them. Cain confessed his not, and he was made an outcast without hope.

David said, "I will confess my sin unto the "Lord and so thou forgavest the wickedness of "my sin."

For St. John says, "If we confess our sins, "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, "and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This season of Lent is one of call to repentance and confession, of humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God, of saying with Adam and Eve, "I did eat? Things forbidden I have done, things commanded I have left undone."

And lastly, where the mouth is open, and the tongue loosened in confession of sin, there will the lips stir in prayer for pardon and for amendment, for the mercy of God to forgive what is past, and to give grace that we may amend our lives, and use our voices in praise for his mercy which endureth for ever.

SERMON XXIII.

SORROWS.

(4TH SUNDAY IN LENT.)

RUTH II. 14.

"Come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar."

TO-DAY is called Mid-Lent Sunday or Refreshment Sunday; in some parts of England it is called also Mothering Sunday, because of the passage in the Epistle for the day, "Jerusalem which is "above is free, which is the Mother of us all."

To all who have kept Lent rightly, who have tried to deny themselves in food and amusements, who have turned their thoughts to their sins, and have been sowing in tears a harvest of repentance and good resolutions, this Sunday comes as a day of refreshment. The Church bids her children lift up their eyes, shake off some of their sorrow, relax their abstinence, turn their thoughts awhile to happier matters than their sins. It bids them refresh themselves before the

more awful season of the Passion comes on, when they must redouble their self-denial, when the shadow will deepen upon them into darkness.

So the Epistle for to-day speaks of Jerusalem which is above; it bids the barren rejoice, for the faithful soul under the gospel will bear many more good works than the soul under the old dispensation, even though it be desolate, its lord and husband, Jesus, not being visibly present.

The Gospel speaks of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand; the collect, of relief to those who worthily deserve to be punished granted by the comfort of Divine Grace. The first lesson for the Morning Service speaks of Joseph in Egypt supplying his brethren with sacks of corn; the first lesson for the afternoon, of Joseph making his brethren a great feast; of the balm, and the myrrh, the honey, spices, nuts and almonds, which Jacob sent down to Joseph in Egypt; the first lesson for the evening speaks of the banquet, and the joyous revelation of himself which Joseph made at it to his brethren.

So the Church calls us to eat the bread of gladness to-day; and yet, at the same time, not that of unallayed gladness, such as what we taste at Christmas, and Easter, and Whitsuntide.

but mingled with a little of that which is sharp to the taste, a little of the sorrow of sin which we must feel in Lent, and of pain for the Passion of the Saviour, which must overshadow us as we approach the close of that season. "Come thou "hither, and eat of the bread," but, "dip thy "morsel in the vinegar."

But is it only now that we have to dip our morsel in vinegar? Is it not all through life so? Is there anything of which we partake which is not moistened with what is acid? What pleasure do we have which is not steeped more or less in vinegar? Is not the whole of life a morsel of time dipped in vinegar? We are called to consume it, to use it, the bread and the vinegar, the pleasures and the pains, the joyous reaping and tearful sowing, the homely pleasures of the family, but with their little sorrows too, the bread of daily labour, with its grievances also, sucesses, but also disappointments, gains, but also losses, hopes fulfilled and some blighted, smiles and tears. "Come thou hither," says the blessed God to the child He ushers into this world, "Come and eat "of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar."

See the child in the joy of its heart playing in the summer field, chasing the white butterflies,

or plucking red-robbins in the hedges and cracking the little bladders on their hands, sitting in the hedge sheltered from the east wind, where the violets grow, busily twining them into a wreath for baby's cap. "Come thou hither "little child, into the hedge, into the pasture, "down by the seaside where the shells are strewn, "in among the corn where the poppies and the "cockles and blue-flower grow, come and eat thy "bread with gladness of heart." And presently the school bell rings, and the child has to run to school; then comes the painful toil of sums upon the slate, of spelling full of blunders, of stumbling over three-syllabled words. "Dip thy morsel "in the vinegar." Is it not necessary? What would the child be without its schooling? What does a pampered boy or girl turn out who is fed only on sweets, never made to learn, never punished when doing wrong, never forced to do what he or she does not like? What becomes of the spoiled child? It has been spoiled indeed, because the morsel of its early life has not been dipped in vinegar, and it finds too often, when come to enter into the battle of life, that all the rest of its days is a morsel steeped in vinegar and gall, by reason of the defect of its training in youth.

And how is it with your own selves? Is it not well for you that your morsel is dipped in vinegar? What would life be without its agonies, its struggles, its humiliations, its disappointments? Would it not be an insipid morsel? Are not men who have never suffered in any way generally very poor creatures? Does not suffering ennoble man, invigorate, purify him? There is a grandeur about the man who has been proved in the furnace which the untried man wants ever. There is all the difference between them of pure silver and raw ore. There is all the difference between the hammered instrument and the unwrought lump. There is all the difference between the winnowed grain and the unthrashed, unsifted shock.

Pain, sorrow, trial! It is that which chisels the features, the expressions, the beauty of manhood out of the lout of seventeen.

It is that which makes the hoary head a crown of glory, and transforms wrinkles into lines of beauty.

> "Many a blow and biting sculpture
> Polished well the stones elect,
> In their places now compacted
> By the Heavenly Architect."

Do the Blessed Ones look back with a shudder on their sufferings, on the blows that moulded them, and the biting sculpture that squared them to their predestined places in the temple of their Lord? I trow not! Will they not answer us—

> "The trials that beset you,
> The sorrows ye endure,
> The manifold temptations
> That death alone can cure,
>
> What are they but His jewels,
> Of right celestial worth?
> What are they but the ladder
> Set up to heaven on earth?"

They, the Blessed Ones, lament that their morsel was sopped in vinegar! I trow not indeed! If they tasted of the vinegar, what did they which their Master had not done likewise? "And straightway one of them ran, and took a "sponge and filled it with vinegar, and put it on "a reed, and gave Him to drink." What the Master has tasted, the servant must press with his lips also, "the disciple is not above his "master, nor the servant above his lord. It is "enough for the disciple that he be as his "master, and the servant as his lord."

If the Son of God when on earth was tempted

suffered in body and soul, and in reputation, laboured abundantly in privation, in season and out of season, in evil report and good report; then surely those who have put on Christ must not shrink if the morsel of their life be also somewhat sopped with vinegar.

"Come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and "dip thy morsel in the vinegar." The address has another application. "Come thou hither," says our dear Lord to each of his chosen people, "Come hither, and eat of the bread from heaven, "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; "but my Father giveth you the true bread from "heaven. For the bread of God is He which "cometh down from heaven, and giveth life "unto the world. I am the bread of life. I am "the living bread which came down from heaven: "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for "ever; and the bread that I will give him is My "flesh, which I will give for the life of the "world."

"Come then, and eat of the bread. He that "cometh to Me shall never hunger. I am the "bread of life." He invites communicants to draw nigh to Him. As Boaz reached parched corn to Ruth, and she did eat, and was sufficed,

so does now the descendant of Boaz according to the flesh, the Son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, whose father was Boaz; so, I say, does Jesus reach forth to the hungry soul toiling in His field, gleaning amidst His sheaves, His handful of food, the parched corn of His precious body, parched on the Cross with the agony He endured. And the Christian soul that feeds on this heavenly banquet is satisfied indeed, and cries as did the disciples, "Lord! evermore give "us this bread." And yet He does not say to communicants merely, "Come and eat of this "bread." He adds, "Dip the morsel in the "vinegar." Let the communicant receive into a penitent heart. What is the address of the priest from the altar, but the same thing in other words, "The benefit is great," he says, "if with a true "penitent heart and lively faith we receive that "holy Sacrament." "Ye that do truly and "earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in "love and charity with your neighbours, and "intend to lead a new life . . . draw near with "faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your "comfort; and make your humble confession "unto Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon "your knees."

Is not this, I repeat, only another way of saying, "Come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip "thy morsel in the vinegar."

Do you think that this address is to the perfect only? Alas! too many of you do think so, and therefore stay away from the Lord's table. No, it is spoken, not to the perfect only, but to all who are labouring, gleaning, in the Lord's field, to all who are in earnest, to all who hunger after righteousness. Have you any sorrow for sin? Any grief that you have offended God? An aching heart because you have gone against His will? Why there is the vinegar already. "Come "thou hither, then, and eat of the Bread of life, "when thou hast the vinegar at hand in which "to dip thy morsel." This is all that the Lord asks of thee. This is His loving invitation to the hungry and penitent soul, "Come thou "hither, and eat of the bread, and thy soul shall "rejoice for ever."

SERMON XXIV.

MAN'S INGRATITUDE.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

S. JOHN VIII. 46.

"Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

THIS is Passion Sunday. To-day it is as though we had attained a height whence we could see the object of our journey after long travelling. Our pilgrimage through Lent approaches its end. Through the long dreary flat have we been wandering with our eyes on the ground, musing on our offences, on how we have forsaken our God, and erred from the right way. Our thoughts have been on ourselves, on our own sorrows, our own short-comings, our own sins. But now we have reached a hill top, and we look forward. Before us lies Bethany, beyond the olive garden, and further still Calvary stands up

against the sky, its three black crosses blotting the horizon.

Our thoughts from this moment are not on ourselves so much as on our Saviour. Our transgressions we have numbered, we look now to Him who was wounded for them, to Him by whose stripes we are made whole. Till this day we have looked our sins in the face, and seen what their effect has been on us, from this day we look and see what they brought on the Son of God. We have been covered with sorrow for what we have done amiss, but now our shame deepens when we see what tears, what blood-shedding, what agonies they caused Our Redeemer.

It is because from this moment the Church looked straight at Him and marked every step of His passion, that from to-day the outward signs of her widowhood, of her humiliation are increased From to-day, in olden times, in our churches, the crosses were veiled in black, and the Gloria ceased to be sung after the Psalms and Canticles. The crosses were veiled to show that our sins as a thick cloud covered the dying Lord, and obscured the effect of His Passion; that sin and the sorrow it occasioned choked the

utterance of praise in the mouth of the Church.

When Julius Cæsar had been assassinated by Brutus and Cassius, Antony, his nephew, brought out his mantle pierced with wounds, and stained with blood, and shewed it to the people, whilst he harangued them to avenge on the murderers the death of Cæsar.

"If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle: I remember
The first time ever Cæsar put it on;
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
That day he overcame the Nervii:—
Look! in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:
See, what a rent the envious Casca made:
Through this, the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;
And, as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Cæsar follow'd,
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no." *

The Church to-day holds up the pierced garment of the Saviour, and bids all men look on it, and mark the rents and the stains of blood, and ask, Who pierced him? that they may be excited to wrath against his murderers.

* Julus Cæsar, Act iii, scene 2.

"He suffered for our offences." On account of our wrong-doing Jesus Christ was delivered up to death. What platted the crown of thorns, and placed it on His head, and struck the spines into His temples? Our pride. What was the lash which struck Him, and tore His sides till they dripped with blood? Our self-indulgence. What were the nails that pierced His hands, dividing the veins? Our evil deeds. What were those which broke through the muscles of His feet, nailing them to the tree of shame? Our wanderings from the path of duty. What parched his tongue with thirst? Our indulgence in drink. What rent a way into his heart and opened it? Our inordinate lusts. He nailed our sins to the cross, "He His own self bare "our sins in His own body on the tree." As often as we sin, do we crucify the Lord afresh.

See then! cries the Church, this mantle of the flesh of Jesus. I remember the first time ever Jesus put it on; it was a winter's night in Bethlehem, in the stable, when He did overcome the serpent and did crush his head. Look! in this place your sins have pierced, your sins of pride, of anger, of lust, of intemperance. See what a rent in that dear flesh your envious

thoughts and speeches have made. Through this, you whom He loved so well, whom He made one with Him by baptism, whom He had strengthened by the Holy Ghost in confirmation, whom He had joined to Him in closest love in communion,—through this gash you did stab when you sinned so grievously last—how, you know best. And mark, how the blood of Jesus followed, as rushing forth, it sought you, to find you penitent, to rest upon you, and out of His unutterable love, to cleanse you.

And how do I now address you—you who have wounded Him with your transgressions.

"I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Actions, nor utterance, nor power of speech,
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;
Show you sweet Jesus' wounds, poor, poor dumb
mouths,
And bid them speak for me."

And what, I pray you do they say? What is the sad appeal of the Blessed Saviour to His people, as they sin against Him day by day? See Him standing in Heaven, showing His

wounded brows, His pierced hands and feet, and rent side. See Him looking down on earth, into every cottage, and farm, and manor-house, into every dwelling of our towns, and seeing everywhere wrong, violence, fierce passions, wicked words, falsehood, slander, unholy acts, drunkenness, revelling, and every sort of evil deed; a black veil that obscures His cross, and makes His Passion of none effect. O! what is the cry that escapes His lips as He thus contemplates the world in its forgetfulness of Him? What is it but this, "Which of you convinceth me "of sin?"

How is it that my Passion reaches you not? Why will you not lay your sorrows before me? Why does not my blood touch your hard hearts? Why, now that I be lifted up, do I not draw all men to me? Which of you convinceth me of sin? What could I have done more for my vineyard that I have not done to it? Come and reason with me: Did I not set you a perfect example how ye should walk? Was there anger, malice, sloth, indifference, envy, any sin in me? Did I not give you God's truth, perfectly revealed? Did I not warn you to flee from the wrath to come? Did I not promise eternal

rewards to those who followed me? Which of you convinceth me of sin? What more could I have done for you? I held not my back from smiting, my cheeks from those that plucked off the hair, my brows from the thorns, my hands from the nails, my lips from the gall, my side from the spear. "And now, O inhabitants of "'my heavenly' Jerusalem,—judge, I pray you, "betwixt me and my vineyard. What could "have been done more to my vineyard, that I "have not done in it? Wherefore, when I "looked that it should bring forth grapes "brought it forth wild grapes?"

I made myself of no reputation, and took on me the form of a servant; I was humble and meek, when reviled I answered not a word, I was as a lamb led to the slaughter, I opened not my mouth. What could have been done more? Which of you convinceth me of neglect?

What could have been more for my Church which I founded? I gave it to the Holy Ghost, I gave it my authority, I gave it a promise of being its perpetual king and guide, I gave it my precious body and blood to be distributed as the spiritual food of countless generations of men, I gave it promise of pardon for transgressions,

hope of felicity for ever. What could have been done more? Which of you findeth occasion against me?

Which of you, in your individual capacities? How many good inspirations, good desires, good thoughts, do you not owe to me? What holy examples of saintly men and women have I not set before you? How many providences have not protected you from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, from the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day? In how many temptations have I not defended or strengthened you? In how many sorrows have I not comforted you? In how many falls have I not raised you? What wounds have not been healed by me, pouring in oil or wine? What tears have not been wiped by me? What hopeless hearts have not been cheered by me? And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem which is above, and is free, judge I pray you betwixt me and this soul, the vineyard of my planting. This soul I redeemed from the wilderness; I made it mine own, buying it with my blood. I made a fence round it with my law, I weeded it of bad passions and evil habits, I built in it the tower of faith, I established in it the wine-press of contrition, I

planted in it the vines of Christian graces; and I looked that it should bring forth fruit, "Love, "joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, "faith, meekness, temperance." And it hath brought forth wild grapes, "adultery, fornication, "uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witch-"craft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, "strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, "drunkenness, revellings, and such like." (Gal. v. 19—23.) What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it? Which of you convinceth me of sin?

I prepared my feast, my oxen and fatlings are killed. All that is needful for man I have made ready in my Church, grace to strengthen, pardon to reclaim, food to nourish souls. "All "things are now ready." Which of you convinceth me of neglect in my preparations? Everything that was needed for the cure of the sick is there, everything that is needed for the nourishment of the heart is there. Which of you convinceth me of sin?

"Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but "thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou "hast not brought me the small cattle of thy "burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured

"me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee "to serve with an offering, nor weary me with "incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane "with money, neither hast thou filled me with "the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made "me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied "me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he "that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine "own sake, and will not remember thy sins. "Put me in remembrance, let us plead together." (Isaiah xliii. 22—26.)

This is His message through Lent. "Let us "plead together." Do you consider how you have wronged Him, how you have transgressed His will, how you have crucified the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame. Acknowledge your sins, and behold His love, His infinite tenderness to you. See Him go through His Passion for you, bear all the rage and malice that His persecutors can devise for you; sweat in agony for you, open the fountain of His blood for you, that your sins though they be as scarlet may be washed and made as white as wool. Let that Passion plead with you, that love plead with you, those wounds plead with you, that blood plead with you, and teach you

when the Holy Passion-tide is over, to dread sin more, to love the Saviour more, to value what He has done for you more, and to dread to add sufferings to Him more than hitherto.

So shall the dark veil be lifted more and more from off the cross, and the voice shall rise from its wail of Miserere into the joyous shout of Aleluiah, for we shall have learned to die unto sin, and to rise unto righteousness.

SERMON XXV.

THE PROCESSION OF THE CHURCH.

(PALM SUNDAY.)

S. MATT. XXI. 7, 8, 9.

"And the disciples brought the ass, and colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set Him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord Hosanna in the highest."

WHAT a different triumphal entry is this from that which conquerors loved to make, and people to behold in those times! The great generals and emperors displayed their magnificence by great exhibitions of their power and wealth, and success, when they returned from a victory. Julius Cæsar entered Rome in a car drawn by forty elephants, Mark Antony in one to which lions were harnessed, and Aurelian was conveyed to the Capitol in a gilded chariot drawn by four stags.

And now the King of kings comes to Sion, lowly and sitting on an ass, with a colt, the foal of an ass, running at the side. What a different triumphal entry here. The Roman victors drew in their trains lines of captives clanking their chains, and weeping in their bondage. He comes with a free multitude going before and following after, praising Him who bringeth the prisoners out of captivity, and dryeth away tears from off all faces.

And why does the Son of David make His triumphal entry now, before the battle is fought out, and the victory is won?

When the Paschal Lamb was brought from the country to the house where it was to be eaten, it was with hymns, and garlanded with flowers, and surrounded with boughs. Jesus is the Lamb of God, the true Paschal Lamb, coming to be sacrificed for the sins of the world, and to become the food of His faithful people; therefore He would conform in all points to the custom, and enter as did the Paschal Lamb to Jerusalem amidst song, and flowers, and branches. He entered the Holy City, borne on the ass, also to exhibit Himself as King. When Jehu was anointed and proclaimed, "Then they hasted,

"and took every man his garment, and put it "under him on the stairs, and blew with trumpets, "saying, Jehu is king." (2 Kings ix. 13.) So now on the going down of the Mount, they haste and strew their garments in the way, and with loud voice proclaim, "Hosanna to the Son of "David, Blessed be the King that cometh in "the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and "glory in the highest."

When Holofernes came into Judæa breathing threatenings and slaughter, the people in their haste to appease him went forth to meet him, and accompanied him "with garlands, with dances, and "with timbrels." (Judith iii., 7.) But He who comes now, comes with promises of peace, and love, and good-will to men.

And now I bid you consider this solemn procession which accompanies our Blessed Lord, and see of what it is composed. There was a great multitude; in it were some which went before leading the way, fraying the path. There were others which followed after. There were some who cried out, there were others who were silent. There were some who climbed the trees, and cut down palm-branches, others received the boughs, and strewed them in the way, some laid their

garments on the ass, others cast theirs down on the road. They moved in their ranks, they filled their several offices, some were far ahead, others far in the rear, some did work more noble, others work more base, some were clothed, others were stripped, but all were numbered in the procession that accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem. "All," says S. Bernard, "did not sing, nor all "precede, nor all spread branches, nor all strip "themselves of their garments to spread them "in the way, yet from the procession were none "excluded."

O great and glorious consolation of Christians! This procession is a figure of the Catholic Church moving on from Baptism to the heavenly Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way past the garden of agony and the brook of death, through the gate of the broken tomb to the City of Peace. He, our Paschal Lamb, goes forward, obtaining victory for us by His blood, opening for us by the key of His Cross the gates of the kingdom of heaven. He advances as king. "Lift up "your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye "everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall "come in."

"Who is the King of Glory?" "It is the

"Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty "in battle. Therefore lift up your heads, O ye "gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, "and the King of Glory shall come in." "Who "is the King of Glory?" "It is the Lord of "Hosts. He who enters in as victor over death, "has opened the way for His great army." He enters and the great procession rolls in after Him.

Look again at that procession headed by Jesus and His apostles. There are some who go before. These are the rulers in His Church and State, those who bear the keys, and those who bear the sword, those set by the Providence of God above others as their guides in this world.

Others follow after, these are subjects in the State, and laity in the Church. There are those who sing and proclaim the Kingdom of Christ, "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He "that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna "in the highest." These are the preachers of the gospel, whose sound goes out into all lands, as they proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. There are palm bearers, martyrs who have won the right to carry it by their victory over death. There are those who cut down branches, humble

labourers, whose work is hidden, into whose labours others enter. They sow and others reap. They cut down the boughs, and others bear them. Their voices are not heard in the great shout, their place is not fixed in the great throng, and yet they are of the number, and their work is acceptable. There are those who strip off their garments and cast them on the ass, or in the way, these are they who divest themselves of all their possessions, of all that comforts and adorns life, that they may offer all to Christ. "Every one that hath "forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or "father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, "for My name's sake, shall receive an hundred-"fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matt. xix. 29.) But there are others also, equally in the glorious train, full clothed, who have not flung their garments down :—these are they who use the world without abusing it, who have riches, and honour, and possessions, and rank, and these are not excluded from the procession. All are going on together, doing their several works, walking in their several ranks ; all are following Jesus, and all are advancing to Jerusalem.

"One the work, and one the song,
And one the joy of all that throng."

Let us consider the benediction pronounced by God on the fifth day of Creation, and what it embraced. He had created great whales and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind; also every winged fowl after his kind, to fly in the open firmament of heaven.

"And God saw that it was good. Aud God "blessed them." What varieties, infinite, and markedly cleft apart did that blessing embrace; the eagle and the lark that soar so high, the gentle dove that haunts the grove, the nightingale sweet of song among the poplars, the unwieldy auk on the icy shores of polar seas, the swallow that builds under our eaves; the whale, the silvery mackerel, the changeful dolphin, the prickly globe fish, the dull oyster, the slimy sea-worm. All, all were good in God's eyes, and on all their heads fell, as dew, His blessing, and all live, and move, and have their being in His love.

There is a Jewish legend, a fable only. Moses, say the rabbis, when called by God to leave this world, was almost in despair. "What," said he, "will become of my wife and children." Then God bade him take his staff, and go down to the

sea and smite it. And the waters clave asunder, and Moses walked into the depths of the sea. And there, where eye of man had hitherto never reached, lay a rock covered with sea-weed, and under the weed was a little worm; and the worm raised its voice, and said, "I thank Thee, God "Almighty that I, hidden in the blue depths of "ocean, where no man hath ever penetrated, can "rest on Thy love, for Thou carest for me, and "givest me food in due season."

Then Moses returned, ashamed of his doubt in God, and fell asleep on Mount Nebo.

On the fifth day God blessed the soaring lark and the burrowing eel, and pronounced both good. Both filled a place in the economy of His providence. He looked on bird and fish, and "He blessed them." What does this signify? Does it not show us that in His new creation, His Church, God has called forth various dispositions, has appointed divers tasks, has given different missions to all His re-created souls, and setting them their work, He looks on them and "blesses them." There are those like the eagle who soar high in heavenly contemplation, theologians, whose eye is fixed incessantly on divine mysteries, and who see further and further into

the truth of God; there are souls which are called to a life of praise, like the lark, soaring on high, yet ever above their lowly nests. There are psalmists, like the musical nightingale, whose hymns become the heritage of the Church; and gentle doves whose sad note is the consolation of mourners. But there are not merely such, raised above the earth, detached from it, flying in the open firmament of heaven, who inherit God's blessing, but there are also those who never soar. There are those who are detained below by their cares, their duties; eager, restless beings, like the fishes that dart through the crystal wave, seeking their livelihood in all directions, occupied continuously thereat. There are also placid, stupid creatures, like the poor oysters on the mud bed, who have none of the energy and movement of life which cause its best pleasures, whose horizon is very narrow, and all mud, but yet on whom the light falls from on high. There are the toilers in the earth, who by the sweat of their brow get out of it their subsistence, very humble and very lowly beings, and yet—God careth for them. "God saw that what He had made was "all good. And God blessed them."

Wonderful, loving, grace of God! None are

excluded from the glorious procession. The great divine, the learned scholar, the wise politician, the thrifty merchant, the energetic commercial traveller, the busy manufacturer, the sailor, the soldier, the field labourer, the poor girl working with the needle, the child scribbling on its slate, all, all have their work to do, their vocation in the great procession. All are called to follow Christ, to seek Jerusalem, and all have their several special methods of following, one by a life of self-denial, one by wise ruling of others, one by meek obedience, one by diligence in study, one by patient endurance and suffering, one by ministry to the sick, one by writing, one by teaching, one by fighting evil tempers in his own nature, another by struggling against evil example without. All, all are following Christ.

"The foundations of the wall of the city"—even of the heavenly Jerusalem—"were garnished "with all manner of precious stones. The first "foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; "the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; "the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the "seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the "ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysophrasus;

"the eleventh, a jacynth; the twelfth, an "amethyst."

What means this variety of colour in the stones of the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem? What but that Jerusalem is built of those of varied beauty and lustre, in whom shine various virtues, in whom in various ways the grace of God is made perfect.

SERMON XXVI.

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

(MAUNDY THURSDAY.)

S. MATT. XXVI. 39.

"He fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

IT was in a garden that Adam fell. It was in a garden that the second Adam began the mysteries of His Passion, which was to counteract the evil wrought by the sin of the first Adam. In a garden the serpent triumphed over the woman; in a garden the seed of the woman began to set His heel on the serpent's head.

"Let my beloved come into his garden, and "eat his pleasant fruits."(1) We hear the prayer of the widowed Church. Through the long ages that had passed, it had been the cry of God's

(1) Cant. iv. 16.

people. All the world was out of joint, ignorance prevailed as to the truth, darkness covered the nations, and gross darkness the people. Shameless vice stalked the world, modesty was fled clean away; violence prevailed, wrong and robbery, the strong oppressing the weak, and the weak sinking hopeless into the ground under the heel of the mighty. Where was redemption to come from? Whence was light to spring up? Who would be a refuge for the oppressed, a light to them that sat in darkness, a light to the blind?

"Let my beloved come into his garden." Let God arise and come into the world, and then the world will learn the truth, and have some one to look to as its physician in its mortal sickness.

But what has earth to offer Him? Its pleasant fruits? All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, the pleasures of sense, the pride of life, they were offered Him when first He entered into the garden, and He refused them. They were not the fruits He had come to taste.

"I am come into my garden, my sister, my "spouse," He says as He enters the olive garden of Gethsemane. And now is He about to taste the fruit. What fruit? Not the guilt of Adam. That it is not possible that He should eat; but

the fruit of that disobedience, pain, and sighing, agony, passion, death.

Enter, O beloved of the soul, enter into the garden, and bring them from it the olive branch of peace to the ark of the Church, in token that the deluge is past, the sin of man is washed away, the rainbow of a new covenant spans our sky, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth.

What does He answer? "I am come into My "garden, My sister, My spouse. I have taken "out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even "the dregs of the cup of My fury: thou shalt "no more drink it again."(1)

When the Blessed Lord entered into the garden of Gethsemane with His three apostles, Peter, James, and John, He began to be sorrowful and very heavy; He parted from the three, having bidden them to be wakeful, and went a stone's throw from them and kneeled down and prayed, saying, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this "cup from Me: nevertheless, not My will, but "Thine be done." Or, as S. Mark says, "He "saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful "unto death: tarry ye here and watch. And

(1) Cant. v. 1; Isa. li. 22.

"He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, "and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour "might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, "Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take "away this cup from Me; nevertheless not what "I will, but as Thou wilt."

He fell on the ground, weighed down by our offences which He had taken upon Him. "Surely "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our "sorrows." Are they not often heavy? Griefs which each of you knows in his own soul. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." Sorrows brought on you by your own sins, heavy to bear. All these, the grief, the sorrow of every faithful soul laid on the shoulders of the Son of God. Your childish faults, the sins you bewail to-day, crimes that are historical, evils that never reach our ears, all, all are laden there.

He fell on the ground, under the burden of sin, of sins not His own, but ours. Like the publican He would not lift up His eyes unto heaven, so great was His shame. O the awful unmentionable horrors, sins done in darkness, which were then present to His pure soul as their shadow stole over him. The filthy words, the obscene jests, the fouler acts of

Christian men and women, present to that spotless soul! In the agony of loathing, of horror, of shame, "*He fell on the ground.*"

The countenance of His Father for a while was turned away from Him. The agony of desolation, of that Fatherless loneliness was on Him—as far as possible to be without God in the world, to taste of the great woe of the damned—separation from God. No wonder His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down. No wonder that He was exceeding sorrowful even unto death! No wonder that He cried out with an exceeding bitter cry, "Let this cup pass from "Me!" To be at enmity with the Father, to be, as it were, an alien. "*He fell down on the ground.*"

Verily, "Thou hast laid thy body as the ground, "and as the street, to them that went over." (Isaiah li. 23.) Thou hast borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, the Lord hath laid on Thee the iniquity of us all, that we may pass over to our rest. Thou hast laid thy body as the ground, hast become the way that leadeth out of darkness, out of transgression, out of enmity, into light, and pardon, and reconciliation.

"*He fell on the ground,*" "on His face," says S. Matthew, prostrate under the burden of sin,

under the shame of sin, under the wrath of the Father. He fell on His face to give the kiss of peace to the earth cursed for the sin of the first Adam. The first transgression in a garden brought on Adam the doom of sweat for his daily bread, on the earth the curse of briars and thorns. The second Adam in a garden pours a bloody sweat on the soil, takes the thorns and plaits them for His crown, and for the curse launched on the earth, He falls "on His face," and gives it the kiss of peace and reconciliation.

"O my Father," prayed Christ, "if it be "possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless "not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Thrice did He thus pray, saying the same words. Three hours was He hanging on the cross. It has been thought that each prayer had reference to an hour of suffering. Why did the cry escape Him? The natural love of life, the shrinking of human nature from pain and death occasioned that supplication, "if it be possible let this cup pass from "Me." Yet the superior will prevailing over the natural instinct spoke next, "Nevertheless, not "as I will, but as Thou wilt."

What is meant by this cup which Jesus thus dreads, yet submits to drink? It is the cup of

trembling, the cup of the wrath of God, full mixed, the cup of overflowing sorrow.

He shrank with natural instinct from what He saw before Him. He saw the betrayal by His apostle, Judas, the treacherous kiss. He saw the flying disciples, scattered as sheep without a shepherd; the denial of Peter; He saw the false witness laying to His charge things that He knew not; the spitting in the face, the buffeting, the bowed knee, the reed, the crown, the dragging about from Annas to Caiphas, to Pilate, to Herod. He saw the pillar and the scourge, the cross, the nails, the sponge dipped in vinegar, the title on the cross, the spear.

All this was brought before His eyes. "Father! "let this cup pass from Me." But this was not all. He foresaw the idolatries of the Gentiles, the sacrilege of the Synagogue, the ingratitude of Christians, the obstinacy, the desperation of the Jews. He saw all that He was called upon to bear of the iniquity of the world, which was to be nailed with His body to the cross: the crimes of Christian people, their bad example to those who believe not, their pride, ambition, covetousness, intemperance. "*Father! let this cup pass* "*from Me.*"

But this was not all. He saw the wasted fruit of His Passion, the blood of His covenant counted an unholy thing and rejected, His wounds pleading in vain, His heart opened, and few turning to it, His cry, "I thirst! I thirst for the souls of "men," meeting with scant response, His voice pealing in entreaty, "My son, give me thine "heart!" and few yielding themselves to Him, His hands stretched out all day, and few taking refuge under them; His sacrifice offered up in atonement for sin, and few desiring to cast their transgression into the lot for which pardon is pleaded. "*Father! let this cup pass from Me.*"

And yet, even in this dark hour, surely there is some consolation. An angel comes from heaven to comfort Him. And not an angel only. There are thoughts rise up, as He sees the travail of His soul which satisfies Him. "Let my beloved "come into His garden," said the Church, "and "eat of His pleasant fruits." And He answers, "I am come into My garden, My sister, My "spouse, I have gathered My myrrh with My "spice; I have eaten My honeycomb with My "honey; I have drank My wine with My milk."(1) How true! He has indeed gathered the bitter

(1) Cant. v. 1,

myrrh in great abundance in this garden of agonies, but yet not altogether without spice and honey. The fragrance of the prayers of saints, their alms and good deeds rise up as a memorial before Him. And He tastes the honey of their love. If He gathers the myrrh of Peter's denial, He gathers also the spice of his repentance, and the honey of his confession, "Lord, Thou knowest "all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." If He drinks the wine of the wrath of God, He drinks also the milk of satisfaction, for "He "shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His "hand, He shall see the travail of His soul, and "shall be satisfied."

If He tastes the myrrh of the mockery of the thief on one side of His cross, He tastes also the honey of the petition of the other, "Lord re-"member me when Thou comest into Thy "kingdom."

O! which do you offer to the dear Lord in His garden of sorrows? Myrrh or spices? Be one with the angels that comfort Him, by giving Him joy in the midst of His sorrow. Tears of contrition, a broken and contrite heart, earnest resolutions of amendment, fervent aspirations of

faith and love, tokens of zeal, a close walk, a heavenward look, all these are spices and honey and milk to sweeten the cup that is put to the lips of Jesus after the gall and vinegar.

SERMON XXVII.

ON CROSS BEARING.

GOOD FRIDAY.

JUDGES, IX. 48.

"And Abimelech gat him up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid it on his shoulders, and said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done."

THE doors of the court of justice roll open, the sentence has been pronounced, Pilate has washed his hands of the matter, the Jews have chosen Barabbas in the place of Christ; have called down the blood of the Innocent One on their own heads. The doors, I repeat, open, and Jesus bearing His cross comes forth.

Children of God, what do you behold? You see the Son of the living God going forth to die. You see him descend the steps with the heavy log of the cross laid on His

shoulders; you see Him bowed under its weight, dragging it along the streets of Jerusalem.

As God of old planted the tree of life in the midst of Eden, so does now the Only Begotten Son, about to recreate Paradise, the Garden of his Church, go forth to plant in the midst of it the tree for the healing of the nations. As Noah laid the keel of the Ark wherein all that were predestined to be saved in the great water flood were to float secure, so now does Jesus go forth, dragging the keel of the true Ark, His Church, into which such as are ordained to eternal life shall find admission, where they will be assured safety in the storms that sweep over the troubled sea of human affairs.

Jacob saw in vision a ladder reaching unto Heaven, crowded with Angels, ascending and descending. And lo, now Jesus goes forth to plant His cross, to be the ladder uniting heaven and earth, down which may flow innumerable blessings, up which may mount innumerable supplications, Angels all, messengers from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven.

As Jacob took his staff and leaned on it to pass over the stream, so does Jesus raise His cross to be the rod, the staff, to comfort all who

traverse the river of death, that holding fast to it they may not be swept away.

As Moses lifted up his rod over the sea to open a highway for the people, so does Jesus take His cross, and therewith procure emancipation for His chosen from the bondage of Satan into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.

As Joshua held up his spear against Ai, a sign that the city was to be taken, so does Jesus bear His cross, to lift it up on Calvary, a token of ruin to Jerusalem, and of victory to the true Israel.

As David went against Goliath with his shepherd's staff, so does Jesus now advance against Satan, who has so long defied the armies of the living God, to overthrow him and take from his armour wherein he trusted, and divide his spoils.

What is this that you see? Righteous Abel going forth into the fields to sacrifice, led by Cain who seeks to slay him; Isaac ascending the mount, and bearing the wood that is to be laid in order on the altar to consume him; David flying from the city before his rebel son, crossing over the brook, with Shemei cursing him as he goes.

Naboth, innocent, accused by false witnesses, condemned by unjust judges, led without the city, to be stoned. The scape-goat burdened with the sins of the people driven from the camp.

"He bearing His cross went forth."

What was this cross which the Son of Man bare on his shoulders, and drew to Golgotha? It was not the wood only that was laid on Him, the long beam and the cross-piece, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Sorrow, pain, insult, curses, the pain of body, the pain of mind, the pain of soul, all went up to weight that cross. *The pain of body*, exhaustion after a sleepless night, the bruises on his face, the scratches of the thorns, the blows, swollen and purple of the scourge, the galling of the shoulders under the jerk of the beam down the steps and over the pavement. *The pain of mind*, the mental strain throughout the trial, before Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod, the instinctive dread of death, the natural shrinking from insults and wounds. *The pain of soul*, the humiliation of false accusations, of slanderers listened to and believed, of desertions by His disciples, of rupture of daily association with His mother, of knowing the agony His death

would cause her. These were some of the burdens laid on His shoulders, these helped to make so heavy the cross that He went forth bearing so meekly.

As Abimelech, when he went up against the tower of Shechem, laid a bough on his shoulders, and turning to his people, said, "What ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done," so does our leader Jesus address us, "If any man come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

"You who profess to follow Me, you who have taken on you My name, who have been signed with My cross, enrolled yourselves in My army, profess to fight under my banner, do what ye have seen me do, make haste take up your crosses and follow."

What are these crosses which He bids us take up. Each man has his own peculiar cross; the crosses are many and various which man is bidden take up. He is called to resistance of temptation, restraint of appetite, war against self-love, endurance of annoyance caused by others, bodily infirmities, weak health, bad sight, loss of limbs, deafness, a hasty temper, a hard life of labour, an uncomfortable home, want of food, cold,

shabby clothes, whatever the body or the soul is required to endure. There is many a cross which weighs heavily enough to him who bears it, but which hardly seems one to others. Poverty is indeed a cross, but you would hardly suppose that riches could be one also. And yet wealth is one. It is a burden laid on the shoulders entailing many duties. Insignificance may be felt to be a cross, but surely not political position. Yet indeed it is. I have seen abroad at times of merry-making a paste-board king of gigantic size, splendidly attired, moved along the streets. What height, what magnificence! Yet peep within, and you find a toiling, sweating man, who moves the great figure along with sore pain and labour. So is it with what we covet, wealth and position; we see the paste-board outside with all its gilding, and forget the weary mortal within.

Has not every one of you some cross? vexatious neighbours who malign your character, or injure your substance. Perhaps an intemperate husband, perhaps a sulky, sullen wife; perhaps an unruly child; perhaps the cross is in yourself, an evil habit which has overmastered you and which you try hard, but often unsuccessfully,

to shake off, perhaps an unruly temper.

Well, what says Christ? "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. What ye have seen Me do, make haste, and do as I have done."

Let each take up his own cross, not wish to exchange it for another; for God has apportioned to each the load he is able to bear. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." If He feedeth His people with the bread of tears, and gives them tears to drink in abundance, yet it is "in measure." Jesus became "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" it was in obedience that He took up His cross, laid it on His shoulder, and went forth bearing it. Whatever be the cross laid before us, it is that which God has ordained to be borne by us; in obedience to His will we must stoop and take it up, and carry it.

And observe, moreover, that Jesus asks not, who gives him His cross. From whatever quarter it comes, whether from the Jewish High Priest, or from the Gentile Governor, or from the multitude, or from the soldiers, it is all one. He

makes no complaint, He accepts it as it is, He bears it whatsoever hand offers it. Is it so with us? Is there the same readiness to take crosses laid on us by others? Do we not fling these down, and dispute over them, and argue that they are not ours, we will not bear them. We repudiate them, not because of their size or weight, but because of the person that offers them. We are affronted, neglected, disparaged, and we give up at once, our pride is hurt, our anger is roused. We will not bear it, we will resent it. And yet it is a cross, designed for us to bear. We cannot obtain what we have set our hearts on, some impediment stands in the way of the execution of a cherished scheme. We trace it to some other person's want of forethought, or studied opposition; and our hearts turn bitter against him.

And yet it is a cross, designed for us to bear. We have met with some affliction in our family, death may be. Who was to blame? is our first thought. Blame is thrown, often undeservedly, on the wife, or the husband, or the nurse, or the doctor. And rankling resentment is felt, and hard words are spoken. We will not take up the cross, because forsooth, it is laid on us by

So-and-so's wilful neglect, or foolish want of forethought.

And yet God placed the cross there.

I find that people are very unwilling to take up their crosses and bear them after Christ. They are ready enough to carry ornamental ones of gold or jewels on their breast, of hanging crosses to their ears, of having them stamped on their prayer books and hymnals—I have even seen umbrella handles made like crosses. But as for bearing the cross of pain, the cross of shame, the cross of humiliation, the cross of self denial, the cross of warfare, that is a very different matter. Let the cross be worn on the breast by all means; but not as a mere ornament. Let it be a reminder to us that, by our Christian profession, we are all cross bearers, that in daily life there are to be found crosses which God has laid there for us to take up and bear; that the crosses we are called to bear, if we be Christ's disciples, are irksome, wounding, humbling to flesh and blood.

SERMON XXVIII.

RISEN WITH CHRIST.

(EASTER DAY.)

S. MARK XVI. 6.

"He is risen; He is not here."

"THOU hast turned my heaviness into joy." The tears of Holy Week are over, the dark trappings of mourning are banished. To the wail of sorrow succeeds the shout of joy. "The Lord hath risen "indeed." "Heaviness may endure for a night," —aye, for more than a night. The red sun set on the dead form of Jesus on the Cross on Good Friday, and with the darkness fell deep sadness. It lasted through the following day, it brooded over the tomb last night; "But joy cometh in "the morning." The Lord is risen indeed."

"This is the day which the Lord hath made, "we will be glad and rejoice in it." The stone which the builders refused is brought forth with

shouting to become the head of the corner, the foundation of the Catholic Church. Death has lost its sting, the grave its victory. To-day sees Jesus risen in the same body in which He died, marked with the five most precious wounds, those five porches to the pool of Siloam, through which all the infirm will crowd to wash and be healed.

The Holy One has not been suffered to see corruption. A day this is in which indeed to be glad and rejoice. Mary recovers her Son again, the disciples their Master, the Church her King.

A Day this is in which to be glad and rejoice. For He hath rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, that the sun may shine in, and shew that the grave is conquered, the first fruits of them that slept has risen from it.

A Day this is in which to be glad and rejoice. For He has brought us through the Red Sea of His blood from the slavery of Satan, to walk before Him in newness of life. He has broken the chain that bound man, He has plucked the yoke from off his neck that was laid on him, He has called him to a nobler work than that of making bricks without straw, He has called him out of bondage to the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.

1. There are two facts with relation to the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ to which, this day, I desire to draw your attention.

"Christ," says the Apostle Paul, "being raise "from the dead, *dieth no more*, death hath no "more dominion over Him." Thus the Lord rose *immortal*, never, never to suffer and die again.

Secondly, "The Lord is risen *indeed*," said the Apostles to Cleopas and the other disciple from Emmaus. Thus, Christ rose *veritably*.

I will speak first of Christ having risen never to die again. "Christ being raised from the dead "dieth no more."

S. Paul in another place informs us that Christ being risen from the dead is "the first-fruits of "them that slept." There is a difficulty about this statement. He is the first-fruits because He is the first in dignity, and the first in time to rise Now that He is first in dignity is self-evident, and cannot be disputed But it is not so clear that He was the first in time. For who does not know that there were several resurrections which took place before that of Jesus Christ. Elijah and Elisha raised the dead to life again, Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus, the widow's

son at Nain, and Lazarus. How then can Christ be called the first-fruits of them that slept, since He was not the first to rise from the dead?

I will tell you. Those other resurrections were imperfect. Such as were raised, in course of time died again, and were laid in their graves, not to wake again till the last trump. But "Christ "being raised from the dead dieth no more." He rises, not again to die, but to a life immortal. Thus He is, in very truth, the first-fruits to immortal life of those that slept.

And now consider that Christ's resurrection is a figure of a spiritual resurrection in us. As He died, so must we die to sin, that with Him we may rise to newness of life.

And Christ's resurrection shows us what this new life should be in us an *immortal* one. When you have sinned, you repent and rise to a new life. It is well. I hope this Lent you have laid its lessons to heart, and learned to repent you truly for what is past, and to make resolves to do better for the future. It is well.

But let the resurrection be like that of Christ. Let not death again have dominion over you. Die no more. If you sin, and repent, and arise, and then fall into sin again, then your resurrection

is not a perfect one, it is like that of Lazarus, of the widow's son, and of the daughter of Jairus. It is not like that of Christ.

O alas! how often is repentance like severed Jordan. The bad passions, the spiteful tempers, the evil habits stand up in an heap, as did the waters of the river, whilst the ark stands in the midst, and then, when the ark passes on, they rush on in their course, and flow in their bed as heretofore. For a while, shocked by some sudden visitation of God, which comes like the ark into Jordan, the stream of evil is arrested. But when the startling event is passed, all goes on just as of old. In this Lent, in Holy Week, the ark of God stood in the midst of Jordan to some of you. You wept over your sins, you grieved that you had crucified the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame. And now the ark passes onward. How with your bad habits, impatiences, infirmities, sins? Will they flow on their old course as heretofore?

In the sacred text we are told that when the flood had ceased, and the risen world appeared renewed and beautiful out of the waters, Noah opened the door of the ark, and "every beast, "every creeping thing, and every fowl, and

"whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their "kinds, went forth out of the ark."

Now consider what had been shut in together. The lion and the sheep, the wolf and the lamb, the eagle and the dove,—all sorts of animals were there together, and in peace, restrained from injuring one another, either by the presence of Noah, or by some arrangement of the construction of the ark which kept them apart. But as soon as they broke out of the ark and began to spread over the earth it was not so. The lion preyed on the sheep, the wolf tore the lamb, the eagle pounced on the dove. Before they entered the ark the beasts ravened against one another, bit and devoured one another, but whilst they were therein all was tranquillity and harmony. They come out and all goes on as formerly.

Well! and is it not so over and over again with us. A solemn season comes, such as Lent or Advent, and we strive to restrain our enmities, our backbiting, lying, slandering of one another, we compose our quarrels, we patch up friendships. The restraint is too great to our natural tempers. The season closes, and we burst out into all our old squabbles and animosities, and ill-natured speeches, and harsh treatment of others.

"He is risen; He dieth no more." O what a difference between the resurrection of Christ and our resurrection from sin. We rise too frequently to fall back again into our former state, He to an immortal life.

2. "Christ is risen *indeed.*" It was a true resurrection and not a feigned one. He appeared to His apostles and shewed them His hands and feet. "Handle me and see; for a spirit hath "not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." And when they believed not for joy, He said unto them, "Have ye here any meat?" And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them. Thomas was not with them when Jesus appeared, and he doubted, saying, "Except I "shall see in His hands the print of the nails, "and put my finger into the print of the nails, "and thrust my hand into His side, I will not "believe." And after eight days, when the disciples were within, and Thomas with them, then came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold "My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and "thrust it into My side."

And that there might be no doubt about the

reality of the Resurrection, there was an earthquake, and an angel descended, and rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre; and Peter and John entered and looked, but the body of Jesus was not there.

And can we say of our resurrection from sin to newness of life that it also is real, and not apparent? Are not many resurrections rather like that of Samuel who appeared in the cave of the witch of Endor, which was no true resurrection, but a phantom called up? Many there are who appear to live in divine grace, but appear only, there is no reality in their religion. Many, with whom there is a form of godliness, a profession of religious life, but no sincerity within. "Thou "hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," was the address of our Lord to the Bishop of Sardis. "I know thy works!" With eyes that pierce all deception, He looks, not at the outward appearance and profession, but at the heart and the deeds. "I will come on thee as a thief, and "thou shalt not know what hour I will come "upon thee."

Jesus Christ rose truly, "as He said." Have you risen as you have said? Has your resurrection to a new life been according to your profession?

You have said, "I believe," as you have recited all the articles of your Creed. Was your faith real?

You have prayed to God for pardon for sin. You have said, "I do earnestly repent and am "heartily sorry for my misdoings. The remem-"brance of them is grievous unto me; the burden "of them is intolerable." Is this confession real?

You have said, "Forgive us our trespasses as "we forgive them that trespass against us." Has your forgiveness of those who have wronged you been real, as you have said?

You have prayed, "lead us not into temptation." Is your desire to be kept from falling real? If so, you will flee occasions of temptation, associates who tempt you. Mind! No mask avails with God. No supplication, "Lead us not into "temptation," when you rush into it wilfully is of any avail. "I know thy works, I will come "on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know "what hour I will come upon thee."

When Israel came out of Egypt, Moses raised his rod over the Red Sea, and it opened, and the people went through on dry ground. Then, again, he raised his rod over the water, and it flowed back and swallowed up the Egyptians who pursued.

He brought back the sea to its place again to cut off irrevocably retreat from the Israelites; to prove to them that their escape was real, that they had in very truth shaken off the bondage of the Egyptians. But for the return of the sea the deliverance would not have been thorough. There would always have been a way back to the fleshpots.

O let your escape be made also thorough and real; cut off all retreats to the evil habits, evil society, evil deeds which you have escaped from. So only, by the bold breaking with occasions of sin, can you make your deliverance from bondage a real deliverance, without chance of relapse.

"He hath risen indeed." Blessed to be like our dear Lord and Master, to be spiritual partakers in His resurrection by a permanent and real death unto sin, and rising unto righteousness; to feel that we have broken the chains that bound us, to behold our sins drowned in the deep of the Red Sea of Christ's Blood, and to know that we "shall see them again no more, for ever." To know that, being raised from sin, we shall die no more, that our rising is no vain appearance put on, but is real indeed.

SERMON XXIX.

THE FRUITS OF LENT AND EASTER.

1st Sunday after Easter.

Psalm xxx. 9—12.

"What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? . . . Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy. thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness."

"What profit is there in My Blood, when I go "down to the pit?" In the darkness and desolation of Good Friday, as the Lord hung on the Cross, such may have been His question.

What profit is there in My Blood that I shall shed, seeing that so many will count it an unholy thing, that it will flow for so many in vain? Every one has his moments of despondency, when his work seems to be profitless, when all his labour seems to produce no result, when the dark side of everything presents itself before him.

There are times when men say with The Preacher. "All is vanity and vexation of spirit, "there is no good under the sun." Not merely the pleasures and splendours of wealth which palled on the great king, but also intellectual labour. "I turned myself to behold wisdom ". . . then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, "as far as light excelleth darkness. The wise "man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walk- "eth in darkness; and I myself perceived also "that one event happeneth to them all. Then "said I in my heart, as it happeneth to the fool, "so it happeneth even to me, and why was I "then more wise? Then, I said in my heart, "that this also is vanity."

Not merely do intellectual labours seem fruitless vanities, but also religious strivings, spiritual combats. What profit is there in all these wrestlings against sin, in all these labours for God and His Church, in all these toils to spread the Word of God, the light of His truth in my prayers, in my fasting, in my self-control, in my watchings. I have suffered, I have wrestled even with blood, and what profit is there in my Blood?

Such moments of despair are common to all

men. He who took on Him our nature, and suffered not in the body only, but mentally, spiritually also, endured in The Garden, and on The Cross, the same sense of profitlessness in His work, the same depression of spirits, the dark side was turned to Him, and the bright side was for a while completely obscured. Yet that is passed now. The darkness has rolled away, the Easter sun is shining, the doubt, despondency are forgotten, "Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy; Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness."

"What profit is there in My Blood, when I go down to the pit?" O, now He sees the travail of His soul. Even on the Cross, as the darkness cleared away, and He finished reciting the Twenty-second Psalm, He began to see the profit. Standing on the top of Calvary, as Moses from Pisgah, He saw far off the Land of Promise. After the long wail, "My God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me: and art so far from my health, and from the words of my complaint," and verse after verse of sad narration to the Eternal Father of His sufferings and shame, the veil begins to rise. "I will declare thy Name unto my brethren in

"the midst of the congregation will I praise "thee. . . The poor shall eat, and be satis- "fied, they that seek after the Lord shall praise "Him; your heart shall live for ever. All the "ends of the world shall remember themselves, "and be turned unto the Lord; and all kindreds "of the nations shall worship before Him. . . "They that go down into the dust shall kneel "before Him. . . My seed shall serve Him: "they shall be counted unto the Lord for a gene- "ration. They shall come, and the heavens shall "declare His righteousness, unto a people that "shall be born, whom the Lord hath made."

"What profit is there in My Blood, when I go "down to the pit?" O! how that is answered now in the joy of Easter. What profit? Why the Name of God declared unto His brethren, preached to the Jews; the righteousness of the Lord declared unto a people that shall be born—the Gentile Church.

What profit? The praises of God ever resounding from the midst of the congregation of the Church, that seed bought by the Blood of Christ, counted to the Lord as a generation which shall not pass away till all be fulfilled, gathered out of all lands, as all the ends of the

world remember themselves, call to mind the glorious works of the Lord, remember their own transgressions, and turn to the Cross. In the midst of the congregation I will praise thee. Jesus is ever in the midst of His Church according to promise, "Lo I am with you always, even "unto the end of the world." In the midst, as the sun among the planets, enlightening them; as the shepherd in the midst of his flock, congregating them; as the general in the midst of his army, animating it; as the heart in the midst of the body, vivifying it; as the candle in the midst of the house, lighting it; as the column in the midst of the building, sustaining it; as the tree in the midst of the garden, adorning it.

"What profit is there in My Blood?" O, much every way. The tears that fell in Lent, the sighs of contrition, the broken and contrite heart, the earnest confession of sin. The rising from death to newness of life, from torpor to activity, from indifference to zeal, from enmity to peace. All wrought by the dear Blood of Jesus! What profit? Look around on sinners reconciled with God, or penitent Peter weeping bitterly, or loving Magdalene, on thou-

sands and tens of thousands who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their sin-soiled robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

What profit? Much every way. The poor shall eat and be satisfied, every Holy Communion celebrated from that first in the Upper Chamber, every soul strengthened with the Bread of life and cheered by the outponred Blood. Every young heart made glad by that Living Bread, every virgin grown in grace by that fruit of the true Vine. (Zech. ix. 17.)

What profit? Much every way. They that seek after the Lord shall praise Him, having found Him and held Him fast. Of old, kings, philosophers, and wise, earnest souls, felt after Him if haply they might find Him They desired to see this day with great yearning, and now it is manifest to all. O! the craving hearts longing for rest, walking to and fro on earth, tasting all its sweets and finding none, till they seek the Lord, and then rest under His shadow. O, the earnest minds exploring philosophies and finding no satisfaction till they turn to the Lord, and then behold all shadows clear away, and all

within filled with light as when the bright shining of a candle doth appear.

What profit? They that go down into the dust shall kneel before Him. On the day of the general Resurrection shall He see, indeed, the full profit of His Blood when He went down into the pit. For He will see all the dead rise, the grave unable to contain them, because He hath overcome death by dying, hath broken the grave by descending into it. By the blood of His covenant then will He send forth the prisoners out of that pit (Zech. ix. 11.), and great and small shall stand before Him.

Joseph, when cast into the dry well by his brethren, might bitterly have exclaimed "What "profit is there in my blood when I go down into "the pit?" And yet what profit there was! He who descended into it, came up out of it to be exalted to the right hand of Pharoah, that he might feed his brethren, and bring them to the rich pastures of Goshen.

And now, my brethren, I turn to you; and I ask you, "What profit has there been in your blood, in your descent into the pit?" What profit has the holy season of Lent, the descent into the pit of Passiontide wrought upon you?

What profit has the Blood of Christ profited you? What has His descent into the grave and His resurrection therefrom availed you? Easter Day is passed, and now we may look back on the period of excitement and high-strung feelings of pain and joy, and ask with calmness, What profit? I have bewailed my sins, I have poured out my heart like water before the Lord. Well. And what profit?

I have wept with Christ, following Him from the upper chamber to Gethsemane, to the Judgment Hall, to Calvary, to the grave. I have meditated on all His sufferings. Well. And what profit? I have risen early and sought the open grave, and made my Easter Communion, with joy because the Lord is risen indeed. Well. And what profit?

Now listen,

"The Earth was without form and void." But on the third day, "The Earth brought forth "grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, "and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in "itself, after his kind. And God saw that it "was good."—(Gen. i. 17.) The Earth represents man's condition when aroused by the voice of God to newness of life. At first, all is dark-

ness and desolation, then the light breaks forth, there is consciousness of right and wrong, of sin and goodness. Next comes a separation of the waters which are above from the waters which are below, a firmament dividing the heavenly aspirations from the low worldly passions and desires. And then, on the third day, from every part of the earth spring up flowers and fruit trees and green herbs. It was not enough that light should have appeared; not enough that there should have been a separation of desires, but the earth must be clothed with herb yielding seed, and tree yielding fruit. This is the sign of new and real life. The earth brings forth living plants. So let it be with you. The time of conversion from sin, and turning to righteousness was the first day, the breaking in of God's light on your formless, void existences.

The second day was when you began to set your aspirations on things above, not on things of earth, when your prayers mounted like rising mists; your natural desires rolled away to their proper beds, found their true levels, instead of flowing over, and burying your whole existence; and then comes the third day, the third stage in renewed life. "Let the earth bring forth grass,

"the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yield-
"ing fruit." Do works meet for repentance. Let us see the results of your penitence, of your sorrow for sin passed, of your earnest prayers, of your aspirations after righteousness. Let virtues grow. Let deeds of love to men, of mercy, of gentleness, of self-denial prove the sincerity of your contrition, prove that, indeed, the Spirit of the Lord has brooded over you, that, indeed, the Lord is speaking to you, that, indeed, there is a Resurrection taking place in your spiritual life. When Jesus rose, "many bodies of the saints which slept "arose."—(Matt. xxvii. 22.) Also, You were made in the image of God, what is divine is in you, but dead and buried. There are graces, virtues, good qualities, which sleep in you, as in tombs, which have slept waiting for the resurrection of Christ in you. Let us behold the bodies of these saints arise,—temperance, prudence, fortitude, justice, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness. All these qualities are in you naturally, because you are made in the image of God, but they sleep, are dead, slain by sin. They need supernatural resurrection. If Christ be risen, then

death shall have no more dominion over us. These graces that have slept in the dust shall wake, and come forth, and show themselves in the Holy City of His Church. And now we shall know if really ye be risen with Christ, if really the tears of sin have been genuine, or only the result of a transitory sentiment. We shall know you by your fruits If like the earth you be truly risen, then we shall see you clothed with a beautiful garment of many coloured graces; if you be risen with Christ, then we shall see the dead virtues of your unfallen nature arise and show themselves.

SERMON XXX.

DIFFICULTIES.

2ND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. MARK xvi. 3—4.

"And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great."

ON Good Friday evening Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, had seen the body of our Lord laid in the new tomb of Joseph. It was then so late that they could not do to the body what their loving hearts desired. There was only opportunity to wrap it in a clean linen cloth, and lay a napkin over the bruised and stained face Had they time to wash the blood from the wounds? Probably not, or it would have been told us that they had. The body was hastily laid in the stone grave, and a great stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre and the disciples, and Joseph of Arimathea, and

Nicodemus departed. But Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome, "mother of Zebedee's children," "remained sitting over against the sepulchre," till darkness fell, and the stars came out, and the Easter moon whitened the great stone, and they were disturbed by the arrival of the guards to seal the stone and set a watch.

They went home, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Saturday, the Sabbath, according to the commandment.

But at length that weary day of waiting and doing nothing was over. Very early on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and Salome came to the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, that they might do to the body of Jesus what was fitting, loving, and reverent; but which, on account of the falling night, they had been obliged to leave undone on the Friday.

"And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

Their poor weak arms could not move the

mighty stone. Moreover the grave was guarded by soldiers and the sepulchre sealed. Would the guards permit them to approach? Certainly not To break the seals attached to the stone by the chief priests and rulers? Certainly not. There were a host of difficulties to contend against. Armed men would drive them back with their pikes if they dared approach; authoritative closing of the place, so that to open it was to incur legal penalties for contempt of those whose seals were affixed, and a huge slab of stone, which female delicate arms could not lift. Brave hearts! Moved only by their love of Jesus, and their sense of duty, they went forward regardless of the obstacles. They had scarcely given them a thought; to two of them indeed they never allude, perhaps they had not occurred to them. The Roman soldiers, the Jewish seals, they mention them not; the only point they allude to with some doubt is the weight of the stone. And the thought of this did not, apparently, occur to them till they were on their way to execute their loving task.

"And when they looked, they saw that the "stone was rolled away." That difficulty was at an end. The seals were rent for them. That

was overcome. There had been a great earthquake, and the angel of the Lord had descended from heaven, and had rolled back the stone from the door, "his countenance was like lightning, "and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of "him the keepers did shake, and became as dead "men," and fled and went into the city, "and "shewed unto the chief priests all the things "that were done." All the impediments were thus removed, soldiers scared away, seals broken, stone rolled aside.

I think that the conduct of these women is very striking and deserving of imitation. They had a plain duty before them, set by their love to the person of Jesus Christ. They obediently rested the Sabbath day, the Saturday, and directly they were able, they set about the execution of their task, without considering the obstacles that stood in the way of their executing it. There was no doubt in their minds as to what they ought to do. It was not fitting that the body of Jesus should be left uncared for. Common respect required that it should be properly washed, and straightened, and anointed, as the manner of the Jews was, with unguents, and wrapped round with spices. Their consciences spoke out

clearly. This was the duty which lay before them, and which they must execute. There was no attempt at shirking it because it would be painful, because it was difficult. Their loving hearts made light of the difficulties. and the pain would have been more intense had they left the duty unfulfilled. So bearing the spices they went on their way to do their duty, as though no obstructions would prevent its execution. And they actually found none. True they were not called to do what they had purposed in their hearts, for the body of Jesus was not there. He was risen. Death had no more dominion over Him. His body needed no spices to keep it from corruption. Nevertheless every obstacle was carefully removed out of the way of the women, to show them that their purpose, though unfulfilled was accepted, and to show us, that if we go forward following the dictates of our consciences, and trusting that God will smooth the path and roll away obstructions, we shall find that He does so. He calls us to no duties which He does not enable us to perform.

Now, what is the way with us too often when duties stand before us? Do we set to work to perform them without bothering our heads about

how we are to do them? Or do we not generally begin by reckoning up the difficulties, and then sit down contentedly in the supposition that it is impossible to fulfil them.

Apparently it was impossible for the Marys and Salome to anoint the body of Jesus. But they did not remain at home arguing that it was no use trying to do what was fitting to the dead body, because there was a heavy stone rolled to the door which they could not stir with their arms, and because the Jews had set a seal on the stone, and because there were watchmen with spears and swords guarding the sepulchre. If they had mused on these things, and been of weak faith, and cold love, they would have said, "We cannot work impossibilities. We would "willingly do our duties, but there is the stone "in the way, and the soldiers in the way, "and the seals in the way." They said and thought nothing of all this till they were near the spot, and then they minimized the difficulties, and when they looked, the difficulties had disappeared.

We think only of difficulties, and so never trouble ourselves to set about our duties, and so duties remain undone from our want of faith, and

want of energy. "We know very well that we "ought to do this or that, but—but—but." The stone, and the guards, and the seals. It is the same thing over and over again.

Take a plain duty. The making up of a quarrel. I know that He and I are at daggers drawn. We do not speak to one another, and yet God has bidden us seek peace and ensue it. The sun is not to go down on our wrath. It is no doubt, a duty to make friends, but what the stone, and the seal, and the guard are in this case I do not know. Every man finds them in his way.

Take another. The duty of worshipping God in church on Sunday. Many a Sunday passes, and you are not in your place in church. Why? You know it is a duty, but—you have not got a new bonnet, or you want the east wind to cease, or the clouds to clear away, and the surveyor to have some loads of gravel put down in the road, before you can come.

Take another. The Holy Communion. Nothing is plainer from scripture than the paramount importance of all Christians being communicants. Our Lord's words are plain, as plain can be, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man,

"and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And yet how large a percentage in every congregation do not approach the altar. There are stones, and guards, and seals of all sorts in the way, objections not real even; difficulties which demand but a little energy and a little earnestness to be overcome.

But there is no need for me to multiply instances. Whenever there is a duty to be performed there will be found obstacles, real or imaginary, in the way. Many will be purely fancied ones with no real existence, which met would fly away, and when looked at closely would disappear. Others are real. But do not fear, when there is a duty to be performed, then there is a way. The stone will be rolled away if you proceed to the execution of what you know to be right.

There are then two very plain lessons taught us by the incident of the three women going on Easter morning to the selpulchre.

1. Do not magnify difficulties which obstruct the way to the fulfilment of obligations. Do not make mountains out of mole hills. Look not at the obstructions but at the obligations.

2. Set about the accomplishment of your

duties with perfect confidence that difficulties disappear; obstacles are surmountable.

There is perhaps no quality of an English man which so strikes a foreigner as the sense of duty which he carries about with him, and of the conscientious way in which he seeks to discharge his duty. There may be impediments without end, but with dogged resolution he sets himself to his task, and does what any other countryman would have abandoned as impossible.

On the eve of the battle of Waterloo, Lord Uxbridge, chief of the staff of the Duke of Wellington, was anxious to know the arrangements for the morrow, but the Duke had communicated to him nothing. He at length ventured to ask his superior what was to be done, whether they were to retreat or to show fight. "Done," answered the Iron Duke, "Why, beat Bonaparte." "But how? Do we attack, or allow the enemy to attack us?" "Bonaparte "has not communicated to me his projects, and, "as my conduct must be regulated by his, how "can I tell you my plans. But there is one thing "we have certainly to do; to beat him." Seeing his lieutenant somewhat abashed, the Duke laid his hand on his shoulder and added, "Come what

"may, Uxbridge, we shall both do our duty."

This glorious characteristic, this feeling which makes the Englishman what he is, should penetrate our religious life as well. The question is not shall we retreat, or shall we show fight; not are there more against us than with us, not are we at a disadvantage, not is it difficult, hazardous, disagreeable, but is it a duty, and if so, to do it at all costs, because it is a duty.

SERMON XXXI.

CHRIST, THE FIRST FRUITS.

3RD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

PSALM CXXXII, 8.

"Arise, O Lord, into thy resting place; thou, and the ark of thy strength."

JESUS CHRIST lay in the grave on Easter Eve, the Great Sabbath, as the day used to be called, because that it was the most solemn Sabbath or Saturday in the year. God the Father in creating the world worked six days, and rested on the seventh, and sanctified it. So God the Son labouring at the recreation of man, having finished His work on earth on Good Friday, when He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost, entered into the rest of the grave. His body rested from all its labours in the cool, still tomb, hewn out of the rock; it lay all Good Friday night, and all the Sabbath Day that followed, till the morning of Easter Sunday.

So it might be thought that the proper address to Christ would be "Arise, O Lord, out of thy resting place." But it is not so, it is, "Arise, O Lord, *into* thy resting place." And properly so. For indeed on Easter Eve Christ's soul was working. His body rested, but His soul was not at rest, it was still labouring. His soul went down into the place of departed spirits, where were the spirits of Adam, and Eve, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses and David, and indeed of all the faithful under the old covenant, that He might preach to them the opening of the kingdom of heaven, and apply to them the blood of His covenant for the cleansing of their transgressions, without which they could not enter into the presence of God.

This is why the 9th Chapter of the prophet Zachariah is selected as the first lesson of the morning of Easter Eve. It contains the remarkable verses, in which Our Lord addresses His ancient Church, "As for thee also by the "blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy "prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. "Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of "hope: even to-day do I declare that I will "render double unto thee."

So Christ, as you see, was doing part of His work on Easter Eve. He had finished on Good Friday His work on earth, but then His soul went down to the place of Hades to do the work of applying the blood of His covenant to those who died before His time and who waited for His coming as prisoners of hope.

But now, when Easter dawned, and His soul had rejoined His body, all His work was done in earth and in Hades. His work for soul and body was over, and now He arises unto his rest, to endure no more toils, and agonies, and death, and descent into Hell, but to eat of the fruit of his labours, to repose in the joy that had been set before Him, and for which he endured the cross, despising the shame.

Well then are the words spoken, "Arise, O "Lord, into thy resting place." Arise from among the dead, the gates of brass are broken, thou hast smitten the bars of iron asunder! Arise from the period of sorrow and humiliation and pain, the work that thy Father had given thee hast not thou finished it? Arise, the crown of thorns shall no more rend tnee, the reed no more bruise thee, the nails no more transfix thee, the spear no more pierce thee! Arise, O Lord, into

thy resting place, put on thy glory! Awake lute and harp! Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

And now mark how He rises. He is the same who died that is risen again, He bears the wounds wherewith He was pierced. This is the same flesh that He received of Mary, the same that He died in, the same that was laid in the sepulchre. This same human body, man's nature, He has raised again and glorified.

His work is over. He has set the perfect example for men to follow. He has taught the great truths men must needs know. He has suffered to redeem our souls. He has made propitiation to the Father for the sins of the world. He has ransomed from the power of Hell all who had lived in hope and faith in His coming. His work is over.

And yet He tarries forty days on earth after His resurrection.

Why is this?

That He may show Himself by many infallible proofs to those who had seen Him die, and establish their confidence in a resurrection of the dead. That the ark of His Church, which

He had founded, might by Him be endowed with His strength, His authority.

The ark of old was made of shittim wood and overlaid with gold, with a crown of gold round about. It had rings of gold on each end through which passed staves, that it might be carried about. It had over it two cherubims of gold with outspread wings of gold overshadowing the top, the mercy seat, on which the glory of God rested. And in the ark were a pot of manna that never waxed old or minished, and the tables of the law, and the ever blooming rod of Aaron.

This was the ark of the covenant, the sign and seal of God's choice of the Hebrew nation.

The ark was a symbol of Christ's Church, made of wood and gold, of perishable and imperishable material, of that which is preyed on by the worm and of that which never rusts, of good and bad, of a human element, and an element which is divine. It had a crown of gold about it, for the Church is the kingdom of God, we are a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, subjects of a King, and all that are in the Church derive their several authorities, offices, execute their functions, by virtue of derivation from their king Jesus Christ.

The ark was made with rings at the sides that it might be borne about. So is the Church Catholic. "Go ye into all the world and preach "the Gospel to every creature," was our Lord's commission. His Church was not to be stationary, to be confined to one nation, one place, but was to be carried over seas and lands to every nation, and people and language.

The ark was composed of a lower part which was of wood and gold, and which contained the manna and the law, and the rod of Aaron that budded, and of an upper part of gold only, where were the cherubims and where was the mercy seat. So is it with the Church, the lower part, made of corruptible and incorruptible material, is the militant portion of the Church, in which alone is there need of food from heaven, a law controlling, and an unfading priesthood. Above all is of gold, changeless, rustless, eternal. There are the angels, ever in adoration, and there is the throne of God.

Below in the coffer—type of the Church on earth—is the pot of manna. What is this but that Heavenly bread which Christ has given to be the food of holy souls? "Moses gave you not "that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth

"you the true bread from heaven, for the "bread of God is he which cometh down from "heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am "the bread of life."

"Lord," said His disciples "Ever more give "us this bread." And their prayer has been answered. Ever more till the end of all things will He dispense, through the hands of His ministry, the Living Bread that satisfies the heart, and gives earnest of immortality.

And in assurance of this, ere He departed out of the world, He breathed on His Apostles, and gave them the Holy Ghost, and with that gift of consecration, His promise that He would be with His Apostolic ministry even unto the end of the world. This is the generation that is not to pass away till all be fulfilled. This is what is signified by the priestly rod of Aaron putting forth buds and almonds.

Again, in the ark was the law written with the finger of God on the tables of stone. The moral law is also the heritage of the Church. Religion is not a matter of sentimentality, a matter of faith only without law, of belief and no obedience, but of discipline and pure life, of obedience of God, and honour and honesty among

men. "If thou wouldst enter into life" said our Lord plainly, "Keep the commandments." Man will not be saved by his faith unless it be accompanied by a Christian life.

"Arise, O Lord, into thy resting place, Thou, "and the ark of thy strength."

Christ is not the only one who has risen, and who enters into his rest; His ark will follow. His Church founded by Him, in which He has placed His living law, and the heavenly bread, to which he has accorded an undying priesthood, on which is the mercy seat, which is overshadowed by angel wings, that also will arise and pass into the rest prepared for the people of God. Jesus Christ is the first fruits of them that sleep. All who are members of Him, belong to his ark, will pass, through His strength, through the grave and gate of death to a joyful immortality.

"Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that "rest, lest any man fall after the example of un-"belief" of the Jews, whom "the word preached "did not profit, not being mixed with faith in "them that heard it." And "Let us—fear, lest "a promise being left us of entering into his "rest, any of you should seem to come short of

"it." It is because in the ark is Christ's strength, that it has a promise of arising and entering into the resting place of God. It is in Christ's strength alone that we can overcome death and put on immortality. In the arks of our hearts must be the manna of the sacramental food, the law graven on its fleshy tables, and the sacrificial character, a readiness to mortify the flesh with its lusts, and to offer ourselves as a sacrifice to God. Then shall we be arks of strength also, partaking in the powers of the risen Lord, having put off the old nature, and being renewed in our minds, obedient and self-denying, and feeding on Him who has promised that He will raise up at the last day those who eat of His sacred Body. And as arks of strength shall we pass over the Jordan of death, the waters dividing before us, and enter into the Land of Promise, the heavenly Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey, the lot of our inheritance, to which we were called at Baptism.

SERMON XXXII.

THE HOPE OF CHRISTIANS.

(4TH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.)

ACTS iv. 2.

"They preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

THE kingdom of Heaven is represented to us in our Lord's parables as an object of great value, a hidden treasure, a pearl of great price, which a wise man would willingly give up all he has, to secure.

Accordingly, we have in the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, as one of the first and best blessings which we are to seek, the coming of God's kingdom. Ay! and in His own sermon on the mount, the Lord Himself seems to teach us that it is the very first thing we are to seek. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

What then are we taught concerning the kingdom of God which we are to seek so earnestly, and pray for so constantly?

The kingdom of God is *within* us, is in the *world*, and is to be *hereafter*.

The kingdom of God was set up in each of us when we were baptized, and is in us so far as we love God and obey His laws, and allow Him to rule our froward wills, and bring our acts and words and thoughts into subjection to Him.

The kingdom of God is in the world so far as the world believes in Christ, enters His Church and rules itself by His Gospel. The Christian Church is His kingdom, in which all the officers draw their authority, every sacrament its efficacy, every law its obligation, from its Sovereign, Christ.

Therefore, when we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we pray that we ourselves may serve God better day by day, and that His Church may prosper more and more.

But, besides all this, we pray for a future state of things which cannot be, till Christ comes again—and this future state is, probably, what we chiefly think of when we say that prayer.

The time will undoubtedly come, when God will reign over a kingdom of men as really as He now reigns over the angels in Heaven, will be obeyed by these men as thoroughly as He is now

obeyed by the angels, be seen by them and known by them as clearly as He is now seen and known by the angels. And then men will be as perfectly happy in the presence of the great and glorious God as the angels are now.

This is an outline of the future which we Christians look for. And if this outline of our hope were all we knew, we should have reason enough to be thankful. But the picture of the future is not set before us in outline only. If we look more closely into it, we shall see that the picture is filled up. Some insight, at least, has been given us into the particulars and details of the future.

It will be my present endeavour to shew you that it is so.

The outline of our view of the kingdom of Heaven, I repeat, I take to be, that God shall hereafter reign over men as he now rules over angels; and I proceed to observe how this description of the reign of God is filled up; to notice the particulars that we are taught concerning it; to look at the way in which the distance between us and the Almighty is bridged over; so that the reign of the Creator over His creatures is not so utterly unlike that of an earthly king

over his subjects as, at first sight, it would seem to be.

When God's kingdom comes, Christ will be king. Christ's kingdom shall have no end. Christ will be king who is true God, so that God will reign when Christ is king; but Christ will be king who is true man also, and therefore fit to be the king of men. First then, when God's kingdom comes, God in Christ will be king of men.

Next, we are taught that as Christ, the king, himself has a body, glorious indeed beyond all present thought of ours, but still a real human body, of flesh and blood, incorruptible, but human, nevertheless,—as Christ the king wears a human body in the eternal kingdom, so the men whom Christ rules will have bodies also.

We shall not be mere spirits, but men, consisting of reasonable soul and human flesh, subsisting together to all eternity.

In the resurrection of our bodies, and not without their resurrection, Christ's victory over death will be completed.

And thirdly, the time of the establishment of God's kingdom is definite. The dead are not yet in possession of that kingdom.

The departed saints, according to S. Paul's trust, may be with Christ, and see Him, and God in Him, and be far happier than they were before they died, resting from their labours, waiting for their crown, but they are not yet in possession. The dead in Christ are waiting till the number of the elect shall be accomplished. On the morning of the Resurrection the dead in Christ shall rise first. The joyous souls which have contemplated the beatific vision, and have waited in hope, shall return to their bodies, rejoin them, and shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with their Lord, God and man, themselves for ever with soul and body united. Then, not till then, will they enter into the perfection of their joy, will they inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

And now you see, perhaps, how the whole hangs together, the Kingdom, the Incarnation, the Resurrection of Christ, and the rising of men at the Last Day.

When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we pray that God will shortly make up the number of His elect, so that Christ our king may come in His human body to claim the kingdoms for

His own; and that the dead may rise, to greet His coming, and receive the recompense for which they have waited and hoped so long.

When our Blessed Lord was teaching His disciples to be charitable to the poor, He said, "Thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recom-"pense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at "the resurrection of the just." (Luke xiv. 14.) The reward you will observe is not given after death, but on the great day of Resurrection, when the dead rise from their graves and inherit their kingdom. And again, "The hour is coming, "in the which all that are in the graves shall "hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that "have done good, unto the resurrection of life; "and they that have done evil, unto the resur-"rection of damnation." (John v. 28—29.) Here again, you see that the reward of their works is given to the saints not before, but after, they have been aroused from the graves.

The members of His kingdom, Christ calls, "The Children of the Resurrection." (Luke xx. 36.)

When the Apostles taught after Pentecost, what was the great subject on which they spoke? "They preached through Jesus the resurrection

"from the dead." At Athens, the topic of S. Paul was "Jesus and the resurrection." (Acts xvii. 18.) It was the same at Jerusalem, "Of "the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." (Acts xxiii. 6.)

Look at S. Paul's Epistles, and see what with him was the preaching of the kingdom, what was the hope that animated his heart in the midst of suffering and labour. "If there be no resurrec-"tion of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and "if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching "vain, and your faith is also vain. . . For if "the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: "and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; "ye are yet in your sins. Then they, also, which "are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished. If in "this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of "all men most miserable." (1 Cor. xv. 13—19.)

Now how different this is from the popular opinion of Christians of the present day. Their notion is that directly after death they go to heaven, to be dragged out of it again for a superfluous bit of formality, the resurrection, and the judgment, and then to shake off their bodies again, like uniform put on for a state parade, and to be only souls throughout eternity.

But this is not Christian teaching, this is not Christian hope; it is much what heathens believed before Christ came, and before the Apostles went forth teaching.

Had S. Paul preached of the soul being transported to a place of bliss after death, there would have been none to mock, but that the flesh should recover from its decay was beyond the conception of the heathen. Had he confined himself at Athens to the happiness of the souls of the righteous after death, the Athenians would have said, This is quite true, but somewhat stale news, we believe in it just as truly as you do.

"If after the manner of men I have fought "with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it "me if the dead rise not?" asks S. Paul; whereas a modern would say, "If my body be "torn to pieces by beasts, what matters it? My "soul will live."

But such hope was not S. Paul's hope. His hope lay in the restoration and resurrection of the body. In the Epistle to the Phillipians, S. Paul declares, "I count all things but loss. . . . "If by any means I might attain unto the resur-"rection of the dead," not, if I might be sure of going to heaven, as nine folks out of ten would

say now-a-days. And this "resurrection," he adds, "is the mark for the prize of the high call-"ing of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 11—18.)

What was the hope which supported martyrs in their cruel agonies? What says the Apostle. "Women received their dead raised to life again: "and others were tortured, not accepting delive-"rance; that they might obtain a better resur-"rection." (Heb. xi. 35.)

It is true, indeed, that the souls of the righteous that are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity, but their happiness is not complete, it is not till they wake up after Christ's likeness that they are satisfied. That is, not till like Christ, they are in soul and body reunited for ever.

Thus you see, when the Apostles everywhere preached the kingdom, they were in deed preaching the Resurrection from the dead.

And it is because we shall be received in our bodies, that sins against the body, intemperance and unchastity are so grievous, they injure the body which is to be raised again.

The soul is sacred, Christ took on Him a human soul that he might sanctify and save it.

The body is sacred, Christ took on Him a human body that he might sanctify and save it also. Religion is not a matter of spirit only and not of body, any more than it is a matter of body and not of spirit.

Christ is the saviour of soul and body. His laws weigh on and rule soul and body. The worship of Christ must be a worship in which soul and body take part.

"Wherefore glorify God in your spirit and in "your body, which are God's." (1 Cor. vi. 10.)

SERMON XXXIII.

THE KINGDOM OF THE RESURRECTION.

(5TH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.)

---

2 PET. iii. 13.

"We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

LAST Sunday I shewed you how that the kingdom of Christ, which is to be set up, the hastening of which we all pray for, and which is to be at the end of the world, will be a kingdom of the Resurrection.

I shewed you that it is revealed that we shall have a king in Christ, both human and divine, and secondly that we shall have substantial bodies in which to serve Him. And thirdly that at the day of the Resurrection, yet future, the kingdom will be set up for ever.

A fourth thing I cannot but believe is also

revealed, and that is the place where the eternal kingdom will be set up.

That place will be this earth on which we now live, and which will have its resurrection as well as ourselves; passing through a flood of fire it will reappear again, purged and renewed to more than the original beauty of Paradise, as of old it was purged by the waters of the Deluge, and renewed for the descendants of Noah. The new earth transformed, glorified, will, I believe, be the site of the kingdom of our God and Saviour.

Now if this were a new idea discovered by me, or by some particular set of clergymen lately, though we were ever so learned or able, the idea would be morally certain to be wrong. For the truth has been revealed to the Church, and any novelty in teaching, unknown to past ages, is sure not to be true teaching. We may be quite sure that no great religious discoveries will be made till Christ comes again. What we have to do is, not to be inventing and patenting doctrines, and advertising them all over the Christian world as quack medicines, but to hold fast the truths that the Apostles taught, which have been carefully treasured up for us in the creeds and traditions of the Church, and which are wit-

nessed to by the Holy Scriptures. Our continual danger is lest we forget, or wander away from, these ancient well-trodden paths of truth.

It is my duty, therefore, to shew you that I am not propounding anything new, and that if I seem to be doing so, it is only because a new way of speaking of a Christian hope has gradually usurped the pulpits of the Church and the writings of popular religious tract writers, who are often not very well acquainted with the foundations of Christian belief. You will say, if this be right, that the Eternal Kingdom of Christ is to be set up at the Last Day, and that it is to be composed of risen and glorified men around a risen and glorified Saviour, then what becomes of the common opinion of our "going to Heaven?"

Now I hope to put you in the way of convincing yourselves that "going to Heaven" is a new and unsatisfactory—because unauthorised—way of speaking, and that the Eternal Kingdom of Christ upon earth is the old idea.

But let me not be supposed to say that what we have been taught about "going to Heaven" is all wrong. I do not say so at all. What I say is, that it is an imperfect, modern way of ex-

pressing only a portion, instead of the whole of the truth.

If by "going to Heaven" you understand that you hope, if you are faithful, when you die, that your soul will wait in peaceful hope, contemplating God in some blessed place of departed spirits, looking eagerly for the glorious day of the Resurrection when it shall rejoin its body, and then that the perfect man shall enter into the kingdom and inheritance purchased for you—why then I have nothing to say.

Or if you mean that you hope, if you are good and true, that at the day of the Resurrection you will see God in Heaven and all the inhabitants of the glorious realm, and live for ever in the light of God's countenance,—why then I have nothing to say, except that this I believe as truly as you do, and this is quite Catholic and Scriptural.

But what is generally meant by "going to Heaven" is something quite different; it is that the soul after death attains to its full perfection and enjoyment of all that God has prepared for it; that it no more needs its body, and if it is forced to put it on again at the Last Day, well! it will submit, and then cast its body off again. In fact, the modern notion of the soul "going to

Heaven" and perfect felicity immediately after death pushes the Judgment Day and the general Resurrection out of place, and makes them useless formalities.

Now, I beg you to observe that we are not obliged to leave the earth in order to be in Heaven. As a matter of fact, this earth is just as truly a heavenly body as the sun or moon or any star. And David calls the rainbow, which does not stretch half a mile above the earth, "the faithful witness in heaven."

We should be no more in Heaven, no nearer to God, no more among the angels, so far as we can tell, in any distant star than in this place.

Moreover, we are taught that, so far as we are true Christians, we are in Heaven already, our conversation is in Heaven.

When the "going to Heaven" is the sum and substance of a Christian's hope, without clearly understanding what the true doctrine about the kingdom of heaven is, it leads him to forget many very important truths. The popular idea is that as soon as a man dies, if he is forgiven, he goes to Heaven at once, and is as well off as he ever will be, he is with God and the Angels, he has no more need of any body, of any world, of any

definite place, his life is as different as possible from what it was on earth, so different that it is difficult to see how his earthly life could have been any preparation for it.

Now what place is there in this system for the resurrection of the body? the general judgment? the return of Christ to take possession of the kingdom? None at all.

Not only so, but it obscures moral truths. If the body has no part and lot in future glory, if it is only like an old coat to be thrown aside and cared no more for, then it does not matter very much what is done which corrupts and defiles the body. Indeed, I have heard folks say of certain sins which are gross and accursed of God, that they do not matter, they are only done in the body, the soul is undefiled, for it remains rooted in faith.

Must there not then be something imperfect, to say the least, about this popular notion? Observe that in the Creeds "going to Heaven" immediately after death is not so much as hinted at. The Life everlasting, the Judgment, the Resurrection of the body, the endless kingdom of Christ, the Life in the World to come, are what the Creeds speak of.

In the Catechism we are spoken of as "in-"heritors of the kingdom of heaven."

In the Prayer Book it is remarkable how the expression, "going to Heaven," is avoided, whereas the phrases, "eternal joy," "life ever-"lasting," "everlasting kingdom," "eternal and "glorious kingdom," are of constant recurrence, a fact which will strike anyone whose attention is once turned to it.(1)

But what do we find in the Scriptures, with which we ought all of us to be familiar?

I am not going to argue from isolated texts which may be forced into seeming approval of almost anything, but from the plain and evident scope of the whole Bible.

Our Saviour was continually teaching and putting forth parables about "the kingdom." Never once does He say a word about the translation of the soul to Heaven and perfect felicity immediately after death. This is worth looking into by anyone who questions it.

And what do we find in the Old Testament

(1) The only exception I am aware of is in the proper preface for Ascension Day; and that is an incorrect rendering of the Latin in the Sacramentary of S. Gregory, "*Ipsis cernentibus est eleva-"tus us cœlum, ut nos divinitatis suæ tribueret esse participes.*" "To make us participators of His divine nature."

History? *God continually striving to establish His kingdom on the earth.* Had the Jews obeyed Him, the kingdom of God would have been established in ancient Israel.

And what do we find in Old Testament Prophecy? Continual assertions that in spite of Jewish obstinacy, God would succeed in setting up His kingdom upon earth. Many and repeated promises as to the future establishment and glory of that kingdom. "Behold the days come, saith "the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righte-"ous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper "and execute judgment and justice in the earth." Under this king, says Isaiah, "the wolf shall "dwell with the lamb, and the earth shall be full "of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters "cover the sea."

The 72nd Psalm is wholly about the future reign of the Messiah. "His dominion shall be "from one sea to another, and from the flood "unto the world's end. All kings shall fall "down before Him, all nations shall do Him "service." No one who reads that Psalm can fail to see that it speaks of the earth as the future seat of Christ's kingdom.

The 82nd Psalm is a remarkable one, begin-

ning, "God standeth in the congregation of "princes. He is a Judge among gods." The rulers of the earth are called gods, from their deriving their authority from the Almigthy. The Psalm proceeds to complain that those who are called gods are not ruling as God would rule,—they give wrong judgment, they do not defend the poor and fatherless, they walk on still in darkness, till the world is altogether in disorder, through their misconduct. "All the foundations "of the earth are out of course." And then comes the prayer and prophecy, "Arise, O God, "and judge Thou the earth, for Thou shalt take "all heathen to Thine inheritance," that is,—in the end, God will Himself rule the earth which men have misgoverned so miserably.

"Saviour take thy power and glory,
Claim the kingdoms for Thine own."

The whole point of this Psalm is lost if we evaporate its signification into a setting up of a spiritual kingdom. It is because kings and presidents of republics, and emperors have so woefully mismanaged the government of peoples that Christ is appealed to, to come and be the social and political regenerator of the world by the establishment of His just reign.

There is no time in which I might shew how that the general scope of prophecy is in accordance with this psalm.

I can only remind you of Daniel's great image with its head of gold and feet of iron and clay, overthrown by the stone which is explained to signify Christ's kingdom which fills the whole earth, and stands for ever.

Nor can I do more than mention that Christ came into the world to be its king, and that although His death was necessary for the salvation of all who are led to repent of sin, yet Christ's death is the darkest stain in the world's history. The world is condemned no less than saved by that most awful crime, and most amazing mercy.

The world crucified its king, and drove the Son of God for some time from His inheritance. Think of God's unceasing efforts to reign over Israel, and their rejection of His rule ("We will not have this Man to reign over us!"), you can not fail to perceive that Christ taught us to pray for that which God had so long been striving to win us to,—viz., to let Him be our King in the same literal way in which men are kings of men, when we say "Thy kingdom come,

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

I must ask you to attend to a very few practical observations in conclusion, for one thing which makes one prefer the old idea of inheriting a kingdom to the new notion of "going to "Heaven," is that the old idea seems so much more practical. If we are to live hereafter in the kingdom of Christ in a way corresponding to our present life in the kingdoms of the world, instead of being removed to a totally different sphere, we shall, I think, see most forcibly that our daily duties are our religion, and that those who really are the most honest, trustworthy, kind, helpful, and useful members of society now will be the best fitted for the eternal kingdom of Christ.

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. If ye have not been faithful in the affairs of this world, who will commit to your trust the true riches? You can not be preparing for Christ's kingdom unless you are now endeavouring to be, by the grace of God sacramentally given, a good citizen, leading, in the highest sense of the word, a useful life.

And remember that you cannot pray, "Thy kingdom come," sincerely any more than you

can say any other part of the Lord's Prayer, as it should be said, unless your heart is full of loyalty to God, and of love to your neighbour.

It is due to Christ that He should reign. It is best for men that He should reign.

"Crown Him the Lord of grace!
Where power a sceptre sways
In heaven and earth—that wars may cease
And all be prayer and praise

"His reign shall know no end;
And round His pierced feet
Fair flowers of Paradise extend
Their fragrance ever sweet."

SERMON XXXIV.

WHAT THE ASCENSION TEACHES.

(ASCENSION DAY.)

S. MARK, XIV. 19.

"So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven."

IT was an ancient and significant custom in the Church to have on Easter Day, in the early morning, a large wax candle lighted. This candle was of gigantic proportions. It was placed in the midst of the church to represent Christ. Throughout the forty days of Easter this candle burned, to shew that the light of the risen Christ beamed continuously in His Church on earth, which He had founded between Easter and Ascension Day On this latter day, when the presence of the Lord was removed from the sight of His Apostles and Disciples, when He went up into heaven, and their eyes saw Him no more, then the great Paschal candle was extinguished. The

light was gone out, when the people came to church to-day, as token that the Lord had withdrawn Himself from the sight of His beloved ones, and that henceforth they must walk by faith only. "Blessed are they that have not "seen and yet have believed."

One would have supposed that after the Apostles had seen their dear Lord ascend up out of their sight into Heaven, when they knew that they could no more look on that loved face, and hear His gracious words, that sorrow would have filled their hearts. We know that before, when our Lord had warned His disciples that He was with them for but a little time, and that then He must go away, they had indeed been oppressed with heaviness.

But it is not so now. On the contrary, as S. Luke tells us, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

And we have, I believe, been very joyous in the Easter festival. After the sorrows of Lent, our heart was refreshed, our tears were turned into laughter. It has been as happy a time as it has been a blessed time. I hope it has been with you, as I believe it has been with myself, a time when I have felt that the Lord in His risen

body was present walking about on earth once more. At Eastertide, I am convinced, many, who sincerely follow the Church's seasons, do feel especially the presence of Christ in their joy.

And now He is withdrawn from sight. There is always a sadness attending Ascension Day. How often it is a day of rain, as though the heavens were sympathising with our sadness. At a school, where I was for many years, on Ascension Day the choir used to ascend a high hill, and sing a hymn on the top. It was a beautiful custom, and it served to remind one of the Disciples mounting Olivet with Jesus, to see Him ascend before their eyes. And when we returned, there was always a feeling of sadness on the heart, Easter was over, the Lord had gone up into Heaven, and now speedily the festival portion of the year was drawing to its close, and the routine of Trinity season would begin.

But still we should rejoice on Ascension Day, at the going up into Heaven of our Lord, for there are many reasons why that should be an occasion of gladness to us.

1. *We see in the Ascension the glorification of our Master.* We know now in whom we have believed. We have seen Him weak and bowed

with our infirmities, scoffed by Pilate with the words, "Art Thou a King, then?" Thou, so mean, so base, so devoid of power, with followers who forsake, deny, or betray Thee? Thou a king, born in a stable, who didst labour in a carpenter's workshop, the friend of publicans and sinners?

But now He shows that He is a king, not like a king of this world, of limited power, a terror to his subjects, yet only mortal; but one full of power, almighty, overflowing with mercy, eternal.

After the sorrows comes the joy, after the cross the crown; after the cries of blasphemy the praises of angels; after the wreath of thorns and the bulrush the diadem of glory, and the sceptre of righteousness; after the knee bowed in scorn, kings casting down their crowns, vials full of odours fuming; all in heaven, and all in earth, and all under the earth bowing the knee in fear or loving adoration. For the joy set before Him He endured the shame, for the joy of ascending to His throne as God-man, of bearing glorified humanity to ineffable light, to eternal dominion.

2. *We see in the Ascension the earnest of our glorification.*

"I go," said our Lord, "to prepare a place "for you." "If I go and prepare a place for

"you, I will come again, and receive you unto
"myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

What was that glorious city, the new Jerusalem, which S. John saw in vision descending from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband, but the place He has prepared for us? That is the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The streets of gold like unto clear glass, the walls set with all manner of precious stones, the gates of pearl,—who does not love to read of it, to sing of it? It is the place He has prepared for us.

When an army is besieging a city, if the general mounts the walls, the soldiers know that they will follow. If a storm-tossed fleet sees one vessel, the flag-ship, enter the port, they know that they will enter after it.

We have seen this day our Lord, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, enter into His rest, receive the recompense of his labour, and we know that we shall follow. Joined to Him, where He is, we shall also be. Did He rest from His toils? So shall we. Did He enter the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, His Father's house full of many mansions? So shall we. Did the angels come forth to meet Him with

songs of joy? So will they come forth to meet us. Was every tear wiped from His eyes? Every tear shall be wiped from ours. Did His heart rejoice in the ineffable glory of that blessed place which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive? So shall ours. "I will come again, "and receive you unto myself." We cannot doubt that loving heart. He joys not for Himself, but it is as the joy of harvest, because of the sheaves which He bears in His bosom to the garner, He joys because of the multitudes of holy ones whom He will bring with Him into the inheritance prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

3. *We rejoice because now our union with Christ can be perfected.*

"It is expedient for you," He said, "that I "go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter "will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will "send Him unto you." Yes! it is expedient. The sanctifying Spirit has much to do to prepare us to inherit the kingdom, to fit us to enter through those gates from which are excluded "anything that defileth, whatsoever worketh "abomination, or maketh a lie." Rev. xxi. 27.

There is much to be done. These consciences must be reproved of sin, that knowing their guilt they may wash and be made clean in the precious blood, that convinced of righteousness, they may be strengthened to follow the paths of justice, purity, and godliness.

"Touch me not," said the risen Saviour to Mary Magdalene, "for I am not yet ascended "unto my Father." Now that He has gone up above the white cloud, and entered within the veil, He can be touched sacramentally. Not before His Ascension, but after it, did the sacramental touching begin, and virtue go out of Him for the healing and strengthening of all bowed with the spirit of infirmity, wasted with the issue of blood, who have spent all their substance on the physicians of earth and have found no healing.

4. *We rejoice because we know that our Mediator is interceding for us.*

Now we have seen our great high priest go within the veil, the blue star-sprinkled veil of the heavens, to the immediate presence of the Father, that he may stand before the altar in heaven, and make intercession for us, holding up His wounds, showing His blood, that by

their virtue He may obtain for us remission of sins and the favour of God.

"See, He lifts His hands above;
See, He shows the prints of love;
Hark, His gracious lips bestow
Blessings on His Church below.

"Still for us He intercedes,
His prevailing death He pleads,
Near Himself prepares our place,
He, the first-fruits of our race."

5. *We rejoice because henceforth we need not fear death.*

The Ascension is the consummation of the Resurrection. Jesus rose from the grave, therefore we shall rise also. Jesus entered into the holy place not made with hands, in His risen body, therefore so shall we, after the resurrection, in our risen bodies.

And there we shall see Him in His glorified human nature, the centre of our future felicity.

When Jacob heard that his son was reigning in Egypt, he left farms and lands, and all, saying, "I will go and see my son." And when he had seen Joseph he said, "Now let me die, since "I have seen thy face, because thou art still

"alive." O, we know that the true Joseph, He who has fed us in the dearth here, He who has forgiven us our transgressions against Him, lives and reigns in the heavenly city, in His bright eternal kingdom. "Now let me die, "since I shall see thy face." Long is the journey, much the labour, toilsome the road, but, "I shall see Thy face."

What though the dark river of death roll between, its waters be cold, a white mist like a veil hangs over it, obscuring what is beyond; I know by faith that He is there reigning gloriously, waiting for me, to feed me in Goshen, "Let me die, since I shall see Thy face."

There He is preparing for me a place that can glad the heart, but above all joys the greatest joy is this, "I shall see Thy face."

SERMON XXXV.

CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THOSE ON EARTH.

(SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.)

GEN. XLIII. 27.

"Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?"

I WAS coming by train from York to Wakefield one evening. In the same compartment of a third class carriage was a young man, of perhaps twenty. He had with him a great roll of dark blue cloth. We fell into conversation He told me that he had run away from home and gone to sea seven years before. During all those years he had heard nothing from home, and now he was on his way back to his father and mother, and the great roll of cloth was his present to the dear old folks,—enough, he told me, to make a suit for his father, and a warm Sunday gown for his mother. Poor lad! he was proud of his roll. He held it up to the little oil lamp that pretended

to illumine the carriage, to let me look at it, and feel the texture. It was good cloth, the best he could get. It had been his delight for many a year to lay by money for this useful present.

From Wakefield the lad had three miles to walk to the village of Outwood, where his parents lived when he was a little boy, and where he hoped to find them now. As I went on my way, I followed the young man in thoughts along the dark road with his heavy roll under his arm, scarcely felt, so light was his heart at the prospect of meeting again the dear old people, and his brothers and sisters. I imagined him at the cottage door knocking,—the door opening, the firelight glaring out into the dark night on the young sailor, the old man and woman rising, as they heard his voice, and then the loving, joyous recognition.

A day or two after, I met the incumbent of Outwood and asked him after the family: for I had learned the lad's name. The old man was dead, the mother was dead also: the children were scattered, none knew whither.

Poor lad! was it not sad to find no welcome, no warm home to receive him, no loving arms to embrace him; and to have to turn away from the

cottage occupied by strangers, to lie in a village inn, with his head on the roll of blue cloth, moistened, I doubt not, by his tears.

Joseph in Egypt, in the midst of his business and splendour, cannot fail to have thought also of his old home and father, of little Benjamin, the pet of the family, and of his other brothers, bad as their conduct had been towards him.

I like to think of him, on a summer evening, when work for the day was over: the bustle, the care of attending to the wants of a crowd of suppliants, of ministering wisely and well the affairs of a great kingdom. His hall of audience is empty, the secretary has rolled up his strip of papyrus on which he has entered the details of the day's work, and has gone away. All is still, Joseph rises from his seat, and goes to the window; he removes from his brows the circlet which has weighed on them through the hours of work, and leans his head on his hand.

In which direction does he turn his face? Not to the west He has no interest in that quarter. Not to the south, thence flow with the Nile all his cares of office; but his face turns instinctively in the direction of Canaan, just as many years afterwards Daniel, when also great and in favour

with a foreign king, opened his window towards Jerusalem when he prayed.

A star is in the north-east, tracing a path of liquid light across the Nile, and Joseph's heart steals along that silver road to the land over which the heavenly lamp seems to hang.

"Is my father well, the old man? is he yet "alive? My brother Benjamin, is he well, that "bright beautiful boy? Is he yet alive? My old "home, is it as I left it that day, when, in my "many colored robe, I went at my father's com-"mand to seek my brethren?"

O, you may be sure that Joseph in his distant land thought over his childhood, and retraced all the features of the faces he loved, and the spot sanctified by his earliest recollections. He remembered how he used to sit of a summer evening on old Jacob's lap, and lie with his head against his breast; how he had spent a hot day under a rock and made pipes out of elder stems; how he had been to the brook on the sweet spring morning to pick forget-me-nots for his mother.

The old barn in which the children used to play amidst the straw, the vine before the house, and the vintage time, all came back upon him. The hard lines formed in his face by care,

softened; a beauty of youth stole over it, as he thought of happy, holy, childhood. His brothers had been cruel, they had cast him into a well, had sold him to Midianitish merchants as a slave. But see, how his heart grows soft, as he thinks that he had irritated their pride by the narration of his dreams; and then, after all, it was God who had sent him before them to Egypt, to "reserve life.[1]

Do you remember how when Joseph made himself, in the end, known to his brethren, it is said that "he wept aloud, and the Egyptians "and the house of Pharaoh heard?"[2] And yet he had put every man forth from the chamber. His full heart, in which tenderness and love had been gathering for so many years, found its vent at last, when he made himself known to his brothers. Outside the house, men in the streets stood still, and held their breath; in Pharaoh's house, the royal servants listened, so loud and uncontrolled was the sobbing of Joseph, so mighty was the rush of pent-up feeling which then burst forth.

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am "Joseph; doth my father yet live?" Only the

1 Gen. xlv. 5. 2 Gen. xlv. 2.

day before he had asked the same question of his brethren: "he asked them of their welfare, "and said, Is your father well, the old man of "whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?" And they had answered him, "Thy servant our father is in "good health, he is yet alive." Then on the morrow early, the men had departed, but before they had gone a day's journey, Joseph sent his steward after them, and brought them before him, and then put all men forth from the room, and wept, and made himself known to them, saying, "I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?" He must hear again the welcome news, "Thy ser-"vant our father is in good health." What love there is in that great, generous heart!

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come "near to me, I pray you. And they came near. "And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye "sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved "nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, "for God did send me before you to preserve "life. . . . . And he fell upon his brother Benja-"min's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept "upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his "brethren, and wept upon them."

I need not point out to you how that Joseph

is a type of Christ, sold by His brethren, cast into the pit of the grave, descending into the prison-house of the place of departed spirits, rising therefrom to give food to Egypt and afterwards to His brethren, who, late, come also bending unto Him for food, when he sits enthroned on the right hand of the Father. All this has been often shown you in great detail, and therefore I will assume that you know it. But what I wish now to point out is the fact that Joseph's love and yearning for his father and brethren are typical also, figures of the ineffable love and yearning which fill the human heart of Jesus in Heaven, for those who are members of his family, those who are his disciples. "He stretched "forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For who-"soever shall do the will of my Father which is "in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, "and mother."[1]

Our Brother, He who has taken our nature upon Him, to unite it to Him for all eternity, craves for the presence of those who are one family with Him in flesh and blood. We are dear to Him, inexpressibly dear, though we

1 Matthew xii. 49, 50.

may have been false brethren like the ten.

Now He "refrains Himself" though He desires to make Himself known unto us :—us whom He feeds here in the dearth of our earthly career, with the bread of His word. Even now He makes for us a feast, even the Holy Communion; and if we pay for the bread which He gives, by alms-deeds, and self-devotion, He returns us our silver again in our sacks, in full weight.

Whatever we lay out for God, labour, suffering, earnestness, prayer, self-denial, is all as money given to Him, and we find it again, "Peace be "to you, fear not: your God, and the God of "your Father, hath given you treasure in your "sacks: I had your money."

Joseph's bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. It often strikes me when celebrating the Holy Communion, that then our true Joseph, Jesus Christ, is refraining Himself. Those whom he loves dearly on whom His bowels yearn, are drawing near to His table. Sometimes there approaches some young innocent soul, some newly confirmed boy or girl, a Benja-

min, who has never betrayed and sold him as have others; and His heart trembles with emotion. It is like the sun, struggling to blaze out of the clouds, and yet drawing the veil over its face once more. In that wondrous mystery, the Lord out of the yearning of His love would burst through the sacramental veil in all His glory, and reveal Himself as He is, face to face, but He knows that the time is not yet come; He enters into His chamber, there, above, in the sweet blue sky, He weeps there; tears, not of sorrow, but of love and joy: and washes His face and comes down to our humble chancels, and refrains Himself, and says to His ministers, "Set on "Bread."

No! the time is not yet come. What stays it? Do you not see? It is not the guileless Benjamin who stands in the way and delays the Lord's coming, it is the other brethren, the ten who have sinned.

There is much to be done to those who have wronged their Lord, who have, by their sins, betrayed and sold Him. They have to be proved, they have to be purified by suffering, they have to be humbled to the dust, they have to be brought to confession of their sin.

Do you not see how Joseph gradually prepared his brothers for the joy of recognition and reconciliation? They were brought by hunger to feel their need of help. They were brought by necessity to worship Him. "They bowed down "themselves before him with their faces to the "earth." "They fell before him on the ground." And they were brought to consciousness and confession of their guilt, for they said, "We are "verily guilty concerning our brother, in that "we saw the anguish of his soul, when he "besought us, and we would not hear; therefore "is this distress come upon us. And Reuben "answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, "saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye "would not hear? Therefore, behold, also his "blood is required."

And Judah said, "God hath found out the "iniquity of thy servants." And see also, how the brethren were tried first in one way and then in another, till their earnestness, and concord, and readiness to sacrifice themselves for their father, were established.

Benjamin represents those holy souls which have never fallen into deadly sin, but have ever been faithful to their Brother in Heaven, who

have never by their sins crucified him again, and put Him to an open shame.

But the ten are those who have in many and grievous ways sinned against their Lord. He is ready to reveal Himself to them, to give them the beautiful land he has prepared for them; they have seen the anguish of His soul, passion-tide after passion-tide, and have not heard.

Why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Why does He still turn away His face, and refrain Himself? They are the cause. They must bow down before Him, acknowledging their need, confessing their sin, praying for pardon, labouring to amend their lives; they must prove to Him that they are sincere in their contrition and purpose of amendment, before He will burst on them in all His splendour through the veil of mystery, and reveal Himself face to face.

SERMON XXXVI.

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH. *

(WHITSUNDAY.)

ACTS, II. 1, 2, 3.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."

WHY are all the church bells ringing so joyously to-day? Why do I see on all sides such glad faces? Why is there this day a smile on countenances saddened by late bereavement? Why are all in new holiday attire? Why are there crowds in the house of God to-day? Why to-day are there so many who draw around the altar

* This Sermon is taken, as nearly as my memory will allow me, from one I heard preached in Munich Cathedral, at High Mass, by one of the Canons, on Whitsunday, 1873. It was, without exception, the finest piece of oratory it has ever been my good fortune to hear, and the effect on the vast congregation was indescribable. There stood by me a German commercial traveller with tears streaming down his cheeks. I can but very imperfectly render justice to the original, after two years resting in my memory.

of God? Why?—It is Mother's birthday. This is the day on which holy Mother Church was born.

On the afternoon of Good Friday, from the side of the second Adam, as He slept upon the Cross, His Bride, the second Eve, the mother of all living to God, was drawn. Forty days passed after the Resurrection, in which Jesus moulded His Church into form. Then He went up into Heaven. But as yet the Church was lifeless. It was fashioned, its members were united, its lineaments were traced by the divine finger, its functions were distributed to the different parts. But yet the Church was not born.

To-day, when all the Members were with one accord in one place, suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the frame that God had made; the breath, the flame were come, and holy Mother Church began her life, divine yet human, formed of human members, yet animated with the Spirit of God.

It is our Mother's birthday.

Ring out church-bells from every steeple in Christendom! Bring flowers to adorn the churches wherever love is felt! Crowd about

her table, to partake of her feast of good things, of wine on the lees! Lift up your voices in a shout of congratulation, "Come Holy Ghost, our "souls inspire, and lighten with celestial fire!"

It is our Mother's birthday.

Holy Mother, in whose arms we lay as helpless infants, who didst wash away our stains of original sin, and present us to the Father to regenerate us! Holy Mother, who nurturedst us on thy loving knees, giving us the milk meet for babes, the pure simple truths on which children feed, and which, nevertheless, are nourishment also for the aged! Holy Mother, who didst in our sorrows give us hope, in our falls hold us up, who didst gently train our feet in the way of peace!

Shall we not rejoice to-day?

How can we not rejoice on our Mother's birthday? When we have strayed from the narrow way, and wantonly walked in the broad road that leads to destruction, our Mother's voice pursued us, entreating us to return, pleading with us, warning us.

When we had gone after other love, and found how empty, unsatisfying it was, to whose arms did we fly? What breast was ready to

receive us? Who was prepared to forgive the penitent, and encourage him to a new life? What love did we find never, never waxing cold, when every other love lay in ashes? Was it not that of holy Mother Church.

And to-day is our Mother's birthday.

How is it in your families? Is not your mother's birthday one of the brightest, most beautiful of days in your domestic calendar? All the children strive to meet on that day in their home; they come with presents in their hands, with blessings on their lips, with smiles kindling their glad eyes, to greet in the early morning their dear mother. Her table is spread with the whitest linen, her little ones have filled her vases with the fairest flowers; she has prepared a feast to which all are gathered, of which all partake. O the joy of mother's birthday! The dear old face sparkling as the sea sparkles when the sun burns on it; the white hair shining like a crown of glory; the furrows on the brow speaking of sorrows she has borne, when she travailed with us, when her heart ached over our wanderings; how glorious they are! how holy they are! how inexpressibly dear to us they are!

And what if, in the midst of her rejoicing, a tear be seen to trickle down her cheek? All know why it runs its silent course. She is thinking of dead ones who are not there, of children also who have wandered to some distant part of the earth, who cannot come home to greet their mother on this happy day. Shall her eyes ever rest on their loved faces again? She cannot hope it,—thence the tear.

But when her children, who are about her, mark the sign of sorrow, they redouble their tenderness, their words of love, their tokens of devotion, that they may win back the smile to the beloved face.

To-day, as I said before, is the birthday of the Church, our Mother.

What a chequered career hers has been! I look back to that first Whitsunday when she stood a living body on the earth, in the freshness of her youth, in the zeal, the faith, the exultation of her spiritual life. Three thousand added to her on that day! Men and women crowding in, bringing all their possessions, and having all in common! The Apostles going throughout the world, preaching the gospel to every creature! The little one becoming a

thousand, the brook a river. I look back, I say, on the Church in her early youth, and she seems to me beautiful as the virgin earth when it left the hands of its Creator and was pronounced by Him to be very good.

Then came a period of persecution. Kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord and against His Christ. The Church was called to pass through a baptism of blood. Then her sons fought with beasts in the amphitheatres, were crucified, burned, their heads struck off, drowned in the sea. I see Peter fastened to a cross head downwards, Paul bowed over a block to receive the sword-stroke, John in a cauldron of boiling oil, Stephen stoned to death, Polycarp in the midst of a fire, Ignatius torn by lions, Pothinus dying in a dungeon, Felicitas exposed in a net to be gored by a bull, Lucy with her eyes plucked out, Apollonia with teeth wrenched away, Bartholomew flayed alive, James smitten to death with a fuller's club, Lawrence roasted over a slow fire, Sebastian shot through with arrows, the forty of Sebaste exposed to death on a frozen pool.

But what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Agnes, Cecilia, Cyprian,

Alban, of Maurice, and Felix, of all the host of martyrs, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

It was an awful time, but it was a very glorious one. If the Church was called on to weep over the agonies of her dear sons and daughters, suffering for the name of Christ, she could rejoice, knowing that they had witnessed a good confession, and would inherit a crown of glory.

A sadder time came. With peace came heresy. Men arose denying the divinity of Our Blessed Lord, or raising doubts on other verities of the Faith. The Church saw her children stray from the faith delivered once for all to the Saints, heaping to themselves teachers, having itching ears, blown about with every wind of doctrine. Bishops even, who should have been guardians of the faith, fell away, shepherds broke off from the communion of their mother, and carried with them the sheep committed to their charge. It was a sad time indeed. But it must needs be that divisions should arise, to prove the elect.

And, since then, many have been the shifting scenes in the life of Mother Church, she has suffered from cruel hands smiting her, from false friends betraying her, from unruly children defying her, from careless sons disobeying her. She has seen devoted ones fight the good fight of faith, and finish their course, tried unto the end and gaining the crown of life ; she has seen days of humiliation, but also days of glory, she has been despoiled of all, she has been also endowed with wealth, she has been flouted, at other times courted; she has been sick well

nigh to death, she has, at other times, renewed her strength as the eagle. And she continues through calm and storm, through good report and evil report, through prosperity and reverse, her divine and deathless life. She is still with us, the same Church which was moulded by the hands of God, bought with the priceless blood of the stainless Lamb, and vivified by His Spirit on Whitsunday, nearly two thousand years ago.

It is our Mother's birthday!

You are the children of Holy Church. Do you not honour her? Do you not cling to her? Do you not love her?—Her, the Bride of Christ, the Mother of us all, who has begotten us to Him by water and the Holy Ghost.

If you love Mother Church as you ought, and must, you have duties to fulfil towards her. She has placed her honour in your hands These are days in which she meets with insult and outrage. What! you, her children, stand by and endure it without a protest? Your hear from press and platform the jibe, the scoff, against the Church; she is derided, she is spoken evil of, she is exposed to contumely. And you bear it! Your blood does not turn to flame! It is your Mother who is being thus

turned to scorn. There is a proposition to rob her in her old age of her maintenance, and turn her in rags into the street? Will you her children endure it? There are many who call themselves her children, who scorn her words of counsel and command. Will you, her true children, join in disobeying her?

There is a tear on her cheek.

O Mother Church why this sign of sorrow?

I am threatened with being despoiled of my little ones. Men would take from me my children, and prevent me from teaching them from infancy to love and obey God.

The Church's heart is sore. Our Mother's heart bleeds! The education of those whom she has born to Christ, it is said, will be taken from her. She may no more train them to God. They are to be educated to the world. Education must be secular, not denominational. That is, the children are to learn all that the world can teach, nothing about God, nothing about His laws, nothing about redemption, nothing about the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier, nothing about Heaven. Or, if taught any spiritual truth, why they are to be taught, forsooth! to fear and love their Father by a pedagogue from a black

board with a bit of chalk, instead of by their Mother lapped in her loving arms.

In Rama, of old, there was a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. The voice, the lamentation will be heard again in England, over Europe, if her children are to be plucked from her by another Herod.

Children of one Mother! The age in which we live is one in which it behoves us to cling very closely to the Church; the enemy attacks her, we must defend her, rallying gallantly round her.

"Though thou art lowly now,
  Pale and discrowned,
Laying thy holy brow
  Faint on the ground,—
Traitors deceiving thee,
  Scorners surrounding,
False teachers grieving thee,
Feeble hearts leaving thee,
  Cruel hands wounding;—
Though the storm hover
  Frowning and dark;—

Though the waves cover
  The walls of thine ark,
And Hope, sweet dove, for thee
  Bring not one leaf;—
Mother, our love for thee
  Grows with thy grief."

END OF VOL I.